

Hafa Adai!

NMC hosts four-day convention for Pacific colleges. **PAGE 3**

6th Marianas Islands Conservation Conference sees largest number of attendees. **PAGE 4**

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

\$1



March is CNMI Women's Month

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Attendees join in a group photo after Gov. Arnold I. Palacios designated the month of March 2024 as CNMI Women's Month and March 8 as International Women's Day last Friday at Gov. Pedro P Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO

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CORRESPONDENT

To recognize and celebrate all women and to promote gender equality

and inclusion in the workplace, the month of March 2024 has been designated as CNMI Women's Month and March 8, 2024 as International

See **MARCH** on Page 4

IPI, Yeom agree on \$49M settlement, but Palacios said to have rejected it

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC director/manager Howyo Chi disclosed Friday that IPI and Commonwealth Casino Commission executive director Andrew

Yeom have agreed to a proposed \$49-million settlement, but Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has rejected the settlement terms.

» **Closing arguments completed at revocation hearing; CCC board places motions under advisement**

Also, after IPI and Yeom, through their lawyers, completed their closing arguments

See **IPI** on Page 4

Palacios on CUC arrears: I want to see this resolved

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

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REPORTER



Palacios

After meeting with U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David Carter last week to discuss issues

between the CNMI administration and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Gov. Arnold I.

See **PALACIOS** on Page 4



BY FERDIE DE LA TORRE//REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC counsel Michael Chen, who is in Los Angeles, presents IPI's closing arguments during the third day of the Commonwealth Casino Commission hearing on whether or not to revoke IPI's exclusive casino license, held at the Attorney General's Office conference room on Capital Hill last Friday afternoon.

RED HORSE on Tinian for large North Airfield project

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

North Field, a World War II airfield on Tinian, is being cleared by the U.S. Air Force's heavy construction unit, called the Rapid Engineer Deployable



Aldan

Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers, or RED HORSE, according to Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan in an interview last Thursday.

See **RED** on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Kikulane Pangelinan was selected at random as the proud winner of Docomo Pacific's Prepaid Car Giveaway, held last Thursday, Feb. 29.

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NATION

Former President Donald Trump further escalated his immigration rhetoric and baselessly accused President Joe Biden of waging a "conspiracy to overthrow the United States of America."

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LIFE & STYLE

What happens when the son of Asia's richest man is about to get married? His father throws a three-day prenuptial bash four months before the actual ceremony.

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Local

Woman in drug trafficking case gets 4-year prison term

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

A woman who has pleaded guilty to her involvement in a scheme to smuggle drugs into the CNMI through the U.S. Postal Service has been sentenced to a four-year imprisonment term, or 51 months.

Following a sentencing hearing last Thursday, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David Carter imposed a 51-month imprisonment term on Xing Rui Gao, with credit for time served, followed by three years of supervised release.

Following her sentencing, Gao was remanded back to U.S. Marshals Service's custody.

Gao is one of three defendants charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 1,809 grams of methamphetamine that arrived in the mail on June 21-22, 2022.

Gao's co-defendants are Yang Chun and Wang Yurong. The two have since both been sentenced to 70 months and 46 months, respectively, in prison.

According to the complaint against Gao, between June 21, 2022 and June 22, 2022, she conspired with Yang and Wang, along with others, to possess methamphetamine, with intent to distribute.

In December 2022, Yang,

45, and Wang, 49, each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a federally controlled substance.

According to the complaint against the defendants, CNMI Customs officers searched

discovered the methamphetamine on June 21, 2022, during a routine search of a parcel at the U.S. Post Office in Chalan Kanoa.

Package No. 1 contained approximately 602.6 gross grams of drugs. Package No.

2 contained approximately 656.6 gross grams, and Package No. 3 contained approximately 576.3 gross grams.

All three packages weighed approximately 1,835.5 gross grams or 4.04 lbs. of methamphetamine.

After conducting surveillance of the intended recipient of the parcel addressed to a private mailbox company, Yang and Wang were arrested.

Later, Gao was arrested after it was determined that she was tasked with selling the drugs.

killseph to debut 'You're Mine' on March 8

At just 15 years old, killseph crafts soul stirring melodies and evocative storytelling that proves age has no bounds. With a sound reminiscent of Bryson Tiller and Chris Brown, killseph's upcoming single, "You're Mine," is chill, romantic, and houses an atmosphere full of feeling complemented by lively visuals curated by influencer Christian Merck Grey.

Drawing from influences spanning R&B, hip hop, and pop, killseph invites audiences into his world of introspection and passion.

Inspired by a desire to break free from the confines of his past emo

rap persona, killseph approached "You're Mine" with a fresh perspective, aiming to unlock a new mood and sound. It serves as a declaration of his true identity and aspirations, embodying a sense of intimacy and vulnerability along the way.

"I was tired of making the same sad songs over and over again and wanted to unlock a new mood I had never shown to anyone else before," said killseph. "'You're Mine' really is the poster child of what I really am and what I want to become."

Adding visual depth to "You're Mine" is Grey, whose creative direction

brings an extra layer of meaning to the song.

As killseph continues to evolve as an artist, "You're Mine" represents a bold step forward, setting the stage for what promises to be an exciting journey ahead.

"You're Mine" will be available on all major streaming platforms on March 8, 2024. For more information, contact charleseph08@gmail.com and follow @killseph on all social media platforms. (PR)

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Drawing from influences spanning R&B, hip hop, and pop, killseph invites audiences into his world of introspection and passion.



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Hafa Adair
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PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division will start the CNMI 2024 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey beginning on March 01, 2024 and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All businesses and employers (Private & Public), with and with no employees, are urged to complete this survey before March 15, 2024.

Data Collection Portal Link:
<https://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/>

NMC hosts four-day convention for Pacific colleges

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Micronesia Islands College Board and Pacific Islands Governance Leadership Institute, which includes the Northern Marianas College, gathered for the



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Members of the Micronesia Islands College Board and Pacific Islands Governance Leadership Institute gathered for the groups' inaugural meeting last Wednesday, at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan.

Rise in fuel prices causes FAC to increase

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has been notified by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands that there has been an increase in the average international fuel oil prices which affects the Fuel Adjustment Charge. Pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, CUC is required to adjust the FAC

pass-through rate when the "Mean of Platts Singapore" monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the FAC rate.

As a result, the current FAC rate will increase by \$0.01575 from the current rate of \$0.24894 per kWh to \$0.26469 per kWh effective

March 1, 2024.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC Electric Rate, which is strictly for fuel and fuel-related purchases. The second component is the CUC Base Rate, which has not increased since April 2014, is used to fund operations, projects, debt services, or non-fuel-related expenses. (PR)

groups' inaugural meeting on Saipan last Wednesday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan.

Officials and delegates from the Northern Marianas College welcomed delegates from the College of Micronesia-FSM, College of the Marshall Islands, Guam Community College, and Palau Community College, as well as participants representing Palau, Guam, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap and the Marshall Islands to the four-day convention.

In last Wednesday's inaugural meeting, spokesmen from the different colleges expressed excitement at being on island and participate in the core mission of the group, which is to collaboratively address and overcome the shared challenges faced by educational institutions in the Pacific.

The four-day meeting is hosted by NMC, the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council, and the Association of Community College Trustees.

GCC's Carlo Leon Guerrero was one of the many

who shared gratitude for the event. "... [I] thank everyone for this opportunity to get together and bring a meeting of the mind to discuss how we want to move forward with community colleges and education in our region, along with the support of ACCT, as well as everyone in this

room," he said.

At the meeting, Salome Andrike from the College of the Marshall Islands was elected chairman, Suzanne Gallen from the College of Micronesia-FSM was elected vice chair, and Leon Guerrero of Guam Community College was elected secretary.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

BOARD OF PAROLE

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The Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Governor and the Honorable David Apatang, Lt Governor, through the Board of Parole Office, and pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section II of the "Open Government Act of 1992", hereby give Official Notice that a Board Meeting is scheduled for March 04, 2024, Monday at 9:30 a.m., at the CNMI Board of Parole Conference Room, Capitol Hill Bldg 1216, Saipan MP 96950. The following items are included in the agenda:

Board Meeting Agenda

- I. Preliminary Matters**
 - A. Call to Order
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Presence of Quorum
- II. Consent Items**
 - A. Adoption of Agenda
- III. New Business**
 - A. To discuss and make decision on parolee Ezra Deleon Guerrero medical emergency travel request
- IV. Adjournment**

For any additional information about the meeting, please call the Parole Office at telephone numbers 664-3300.

/s/
Christopher Leon Guerrero
Chairman, Board of Parole

March 1st 2024
Date

MOBILE CLINIC SCHEDULE

for March 2024

Adult Health Check

Mar 8th
& 15th

- Mar. 8 at NAP Office, As Lito from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
- Mar. 15 at Kagman Community Center, Kagman from 8:00AM - 11:30AM

Clinical check with provider includes routine wellness exam, physical screening for height and weight, and/or consultation for other concerns. Other community health services: blood pressure check, glucose check, resources & referrals.

Child Health Check

Mar 6th
& 22nd

- Mar. 6 at Joeten Kiyu Public Library, Susupe from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
- Mar. 22 at Lucky De Market, Dandan from 1:00PM - 4:30PM

For children 0-17 years old. Clinical check with provider includes developmental behavioral assessment, measurement and growth, other health screening, and/or consultation for other concerns.

Women Health Check

Mar 4th
& 18th

- Mar. 4 at WIC Office, Navy Hill from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
- Mar. 18 at Mount Carmel Cathedral, Chalan Kanoa from 8:00AM - 11:30AM

Recommended for women who haven't seen a provider in over a year for clinical services: Pap Smears, breast exams, prenatal care, postpartum care, and/or contraceptive counseling and methods

MARCH IS NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH

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6th Marianas Islands Conservation Conference sees largest number of attendees

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

This year's extension of the Marianas Islands Conservation Conference saw the largest number of participants, surpassing the number of participants seen in previous years by over 100.

Steven Johnson, acting president of *Tāno, Tāsi, Yan Todu*, the group that organizes the annual Marianas Islands Conservation Conference, stated last Friday after the weeklong event's conclusion that this year's conference was the largest in the last seven years.

"This year was our biggest conference. We had over 400 participants and it was a mix of virtual and in-person participants. We had about 300 in-person participants. This was the biggest of more than



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

This year's extension of the Marianas Islands Conservation Conference saw the largest number of participants, surpassing the number of participants seen in previous years by over 100.

100. We're so happy about that. We also really pride ourselves on [on the fact] that this event is completely free for the community. No one had to pay a single penny to learn or share the amazing things happening in the Marianas,"

he said.

Last week's event was the sixth Marianas Islands Conservation Conference and has been held every year for seven years, except when it was temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Johnson said aside from seeing its largest group of attendees, this year's conference was special because the topics discussed included Ocean and Terrestrial topics.

"This is the first time we've combined Ocean and Terres-

trial topics. Previously we were only doing Terrestrial topics. Thanks to a bunch of generous donations, we've been able to expand the conference," he said.

Johnson said the highlight of this year's conference was that *Tāno, Tāsi, Yan Todu* was able to include a panel that discussed traditional and ecological knowledge.

"That's knowledge that exists not through what we think of as science, but through culture and custom. We had amazing contributions from members of our community like our navigators who

came out to share their insight on what it means not only to learn about the environment, but to connect with the environment as well. We also had contributions from members of the community who shared insight about the language, the lands in the Marianas, and more. It's been amazing because we never had this before so that's a space we were happy to facilitate and elevate that knowledge in our community," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

IPI

From page 1

during Friday's hearing whether to revoke or not IPI's exclusive casino license, CCC board vice chair Rafael S. Demapan and the board's lawyer, assistant attorney general Carl Dela Cruz, said that IPI's motion to disqualify the commissioners from presiding over the case, along with other motions, are placed under advisement and will be addressed in a written order.

Demapan said they are going to hold a public meeting within 30 days, in which the commissioners are also going to deliberate and members of the public will be allowed to speak.

IPI director/manager Chi testified that IPI and Yeom or the CCC have agreed for IPI to pay \$16 million to \$17 million just to lift the CCC's suspension of IPI's casino license, and then IPI will pay \$31 million on its arrears in the annual regulatory and license fees.

"We have submitted pro-

posals, which was not responded. I guess it was accepted by one party but rejected by another party or not responded by another party," he said at the meeting held at the Office of the Governor's conference room on Capital Hill. The revocation hearing was reconvened at the Office of the Attorney General's conference room in the afternoon.

When IPI counsel Michael Chen asked for clarification what "another party" he was referring to, Chi said that Palacios did not approve the settlement proposal.

Chi said they basically had to renegotiate with Palacios through his counsel, but he (Palacios) has never given them a proposal that is acceptable to IPI.

He said Palacios waited for three weeks in trying to make his decision until he (Palacios) returned and told them he rejected the offer.

Chi said they had an agreement with CCC based on the settlement terms, but Palacios did not agree to that.

"And we had to go back to the table. We're trying to figure out what...is acceptable [to] the governor, but the governor did not provide any counteroffer or proposal to us," he said.

Chi said they at first were negotiating strictly with the CCC, without the governor or the governor's counsel being present. Once IPI and Yeom had the framework developed that is agreeable to both CCC and IPI, the CCC was supposed to present it to Palacios.

Chi said they never got an answer from Palacios until the governor came in one day and stated that he would like to see all proposals and make his own decisions because this is a decision that he has to live with.

Chen pointed out that it is his understanding that the CCC is an autonomous agency that can make its own decision.

Chen said the terms of the proposed settlement are fairly comprehensive as it covers the arrears and both future license and regulatory fees and other payments as well, like penalties.

Chi said it is quite frustrating when they keep negotiating and not able to get something in return that's agreeable to the CCC.

Chi agreed with Chen statement that the major obstacle to the process is that IPI is negotiating with more than one party and that IPI does not know what the CNMI necessarily wants.

Chi said if IPI fails to make any payment on the settlement terms, it would be voluntarily giving up the license and will not challenge any administrative proceedings.

Whether or not IPI waives its exclusive gaming license, Chi said they are fine with the splitting of the license.

He said IPI will agree for the Legislature to amend Public Law 18-56 to change the casino license from exclusive to non-exclusive, and the Casino License Agreement as well.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

MARCH

From page 1

Women's Day.

Dozens of dignitaries and community members joined Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, first lady Wella Palacios, and the CNMI Women's Affairs Office last Friday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe for the proclamation signing that recognizes and highlights the women of the CNMI.

Participants at the signing ceremony paid homage and observed a moment of silence to honor the late Felicidad Leiwamal Taman Ogumoro, and a candle was lit in her memory by her daughter, Les

Ogumoro-Uludong. Felicidad Ogumoro was a former lawmaker who championed the cause of the CNMI's indigenous population.

"Many of us know who she is, and the trail that she blazed and steered for those coming behind her. She is the epitome of not just a leader, but an individual that has the vision to provide for a better common future. We remember her legacy, and we remember the legacy of other women in our history that have made this tremendous contribution to make our lives better today," Palacios said.

In his remarks, Palacios said that he is proud to see that the CNMI today has many women in leadership roles, and

added that most individuals in his administration are women.

"I encourage our community to raise awareness on women's rights and gender equality, take part in the appropriate programs and events of this month, and recognize the meaningful and impactful contribution made by women," he added.

The event's inspirational speaker, Liekeila'akata Iakopo, said, "My way to success was paved for me by women, those before me and those in my life. My late godmother, my grandmother, and my mother each taught me what strength and grit look like, while also embodying compassion and kindness. They are not only my inspiration, but

my foundation and strength. For that, I am grateful."

The theme for this year's observance of Women's Month is "WE (Women and Everyone) for Gender Equality, Inclusion and Resiliency," and the theme for International Women's Day is "Inspire Inclusion."

The proclamation encourages community members to take part in upcoming community activities that will be held in celebration of women.

Students Kaleia Carmen Taitano Arriola, Sohayla Deleon Guerrero, and Kyuwi Elameto Lisua read the proclamation in English, Chamorro and Carolinian, and Ace Elameto Rosemarie Lisua, and Dezerace sung the national anthem.

PALACIOS

From page 1

Palacios said steps have been made to address the issues and he hopes a resolution is forthcoming.

According to Palacios, as soon as he returned to Saipan last Thursday, he met with Carter to discuss the amount the CNMI government owes CUC and come up with ways to address the alleged arrears.

"We had a very productive meeting last Thursday afternoon, inclusive of CUC, the secretary of Finance, Attorney General's Office, and the attorneys of the Department of Justice and [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] representatives. The judge asked us to sit down and see what needs to be done to put CUC and the whole issue on a better roadmap moving forward and that it doesn't continue...in perpetuity," he said.

At the meeting, CUC and the CNMI Finance Department said that they have their respective records and the numbers on the arrears do not match up, Palacios said.

"So, we hammered out an agreement and roadmap on what we need to do. There's obviously a situation where CUC and our Department of Finance's figures do not line up and need to be reconciled. The figures are vastly different; significant differences were seen. One of the tasks

is for the Department of Finance and CUC staff to sit down and really put all their numbers together and within the next 30 days, we should have results and put forth an agreement for judge Carter to consider," he said.

"We've come out with an agreement on a timeline to address those. It's about a \$1.7 million outstanding billing. Obviously, it's CUC's contention that the central government had not made any payments at all, but it's the Department of Finance's contention that we did. They have their own respective records that they must reconcile together. That's where we're at and I'm hoping this will be resolved," Palacios added.

Palacios said he hopes to see this issue resolved in the next few months. "I certainly want to see this resolved, CUC and Finance want to see this resolved, and I don't want to continue to see or hear that this administration is not taking any steps to discuss the issue with CUC and come up with some beneficial solutions for the Commonwealth," he said.

CUC issued last year numerous disconnection notices to different government agencies, which essentially meant the CNMI administration failed to make payments for utility bills. *Saipan Tribune* learned due to the alleged nonpayment, the CNMI administration has already racked up arrears worth millions of dollars.

RED

From page 1

Aldan said that RED HORSE is clearing the old runways and access roads and will be on Tinian for quite some time until they complete the entire project.

"The whole project is to pave the entire North Field and roads coming down to the village and that's a big project," said Adan, adding that the project may take them three to four years.

He said the buildup of

personnel might go from 200 to 300.

The mayor said this is an Air Force construction project and that RED Horse is like the Seabees of the U.S. Navy. With respect to the divert airfield that the U.S. military is building on Tinian, Aldan said it is moving along and they are about to start on Phase 2 with the fuel pipeline.

He said the project was awarded to Black Micro Corp.

Phase 2 is the construction of the parking apron and taxiways with shoulders and utilities.

Comments sought for Digital Equity Five-Year Workplan

The CNMI Broadband Policy and Development Office, established under the CNMI Office of the Governor, is excited to unveil its Digital Equity Five-Year Workplan to the public. This comprehensive plan, initially submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, aims to promote digital equity and support digital inclusion across the CNMI.

As part of its commitment to transparency and community involvement, the BPD Office invites all residents to review and provide feedback on the Digital Equity Five-Year Workplan. A 30-day public comment period will begin on March 6, 2024, and end on April 6, 2024, 4:30pm ChSt, allowing ample time for community input. The BPD Office

highly encourages the public to provide comments and feedback, emphasizing that all submissions undergo thorough review and may contribute to enhancing the Digital Equity Five-Year Workplan to better align with the needs of CNMI residents.

When asked about digital equity and its importance, De Faustina Camacho, BPD's Digital Equity Outreach specialist, stated, "When digital equity comes in, it opens the doors to our people, and allows us to be connected to opportunities that may seem out of our reach." She further emphasized that the unveiling of the plan is another step that will bring us closer to bridging the digital divide within the CNMI.

The Digital Equity Five-Year Workplan addresses the

unique challenges faced by various populations, including low-income households, aging individuals, veterans, and people with disabilities, among others. Strategies outlined in the plan encompass expanding device distribution, providing digital literacy training, and fostering partnerships with community organizations.

The BPD Office encourages everyone to participate in this important process. To view the workplan and submit comments, visit their website at bpd.cnmi.gov or email them directly at cnmi.bpd@gmail.com. Additionally, bi-weekly virtual meetings are held every other Friday at 3pm to provide updates on their progress within the Digital Equity Program. To access the bi-weekly virtual meetings, visit the link on their website bpd.cnmi.gov or contact them at cnmi.bpd@gmail.com. (PR)



CNMI's DNC delegate bets back Biden

The Democratic Party of the Northern Mariana Islands issued a call for delegate candidates who would represent the party at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August, and NMI Democrats answered the call.

Six NMI Democrats submitted their delegate candidacy forms and will appear on the ballot in the DPNMI Presidential Primary beginning on March 5, 2024, and ending on March 12. The six candidates for delegate are Nola Kileleman Hix, Shawna Evangelista Indalecio, Joan Flores Reyes, Leila Fleming Staffler, Angelo Villagomez, and Stephen C. Woodruff. All these delegates have pledged their support to incumbent President Joe Biden.

"Emerging from the pandemic shadows, I am excited to finally get a chance to cast my vote in person at the Democratic National Convention this August. In this ever-evolving political climate, everyone must participate to ensure our collective voice is heard," said Staffler.

The Democratic Party of the Northern Mariana Islands will host its Presidential Primary on March 5-12 on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. The primaries will be the first step in the CNMI's participation in this nationwide process, and during this time, not only will Democrats elect their presidential nominee,

they will also elect delegates to attend the 2024 Democratic National Convention, which will take place on Aug. 19-22, 2024, in Chicago, Illinois. The national convention will nominate the Democratic Party's candidates for President and Vice President of the United States of America.

Democrats and registered NMI voters who would like to participate in next month's primary are encouraged to

get out and vote. Democrats, registered voters, and individuals who will be eligible to vote on or before Nov. 5, 2024, will be able to visit designated polling sites and cast their vote for their Democratic presidential candidate of choice and for their preferred delegates. Information regarding polling sites will be made available soon.

For more information visit www.nmidems.org, email info@nmidems.org, or contact 484-DEMS (3367). (PR)



SAIPA HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 et seq., as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on March 4, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., Office of SHEFA conference room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai, Beach Road, Saipan

AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Adoption of Agenda
 4. Adoption of Minutes from January 22, 2024
- II. Public Comment (s)
- III. Committee Reports
 - a. Committee on Awards
 - b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/Forbearance
 - c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
 - d. Committee on Program and Development
 - e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative, and Community Affairs
- IV. Administrator's Report
- V. Chairman's Report
- VI. Old Business
 1. Annual Budget Proposal
- VII. New Business
 1. Spring 2024 Application Status
 2. 2023 Annual Report
- VIII. Executive Session - Appeals
- IX. Miscellaneous Matters
- X. Next Meeting
- XI. Adjournment

/s/ Ms. Kaelani B. Demapan- Chairwoman, Board of SHEFA Directors

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2024

Opening date: March 04, 2024 Closing date: March 22, 2024

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (2) AOA Controller-I
(1) ARFF Mechanic II
(1) Comptroller
(1) Custodial
(1) Master Electrician
(1) Procurement Technician
(1) Safety Officer/Quality Control Specialist

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
PL 6/1 to 6/12 (\$9.27/hr to \$15.85/hr)
UNGRADED
PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr to 12.42/hr)
PL 19/1 to 19/12 (\$17.48/hr to \$29.90/hr)
PL 9/1 to 9/12 (\$10.73/hr to \$18.35/hr)
Minimum: \$36,356.89/annum
Maximum: \$62,182.63/annum

Location: TINIAN

Position(s): (1) General Maintenance

SALARY

PL 2/1 to 2/12 (\$7.63/hr to \$13.04/hr)

Location: ROTA

Position(s): (2) Custodial/Maintenance-I

SALARY

PL 2/1 to 2/12 (\$7.63/hr to \$13.04/hr)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than 5:00 P.M. on Friday, March 22, 2024.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays and austerity, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hsspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-24-011 DEBT COLLECTION LEGAL SERVICES

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for Debt Collection Legal Services.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set. Perspective Entities must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-RFP-24-011, Debt Collection Legal Services**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 A.M.(ChST) on March 15, 2024**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 23, 2024**, to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Bettina G. Terlaje, CUC's Chief of Administration via email bettina.terlaje@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

GCA triumphs yet again in islandwide Academic Challenge Bowl

Grace Christian Academy has emerged victorious in the highly competitive Academic Challenge Bowl for the second consecutive year, reaffirming its mission of providing excellence in education. This significant accomplishment highlights the dedication and hard work of both students and faculty.

Under the guidance of coach and vice principal Susan Pajarillaga, the GCA Academic Bowl team has once again clinched the coveted first-place title. With unwavering determination and preparation, the team exhibited excellence in critical thinking, problem-solving, and knowledge across various subjects.

The GCA Academic Challenge Bowl team members include Hans Ordas (7th grade),

Chloe Shin (6th grade), John Sanchez (6th grade), Joseph Nelson (6th grade), and Guadalupe Villagomez (8th).

The islandwide Academic Bowl is known for its rigorous challenges and high standards and included 10 other teams from Saipan and Tinian.

“This victory is a tribute to the exceptional talents and dedication of our students, as well as the untiring commitment of our coach and dedication of our faculty,” said Beth Nunez, principal of GCA.

Pajarillaga, whose leadership has been instrumental in guiding the team to successive triumphs, expressed pride in the students’ accomplishments. “I am very proud of each member of our Academic Bowl team,” Pajarillaga said. “Their hard work and passion for learning is inspiring. I am excited to have them experience the national competition in the United States.”

The entire GCA community extends its heartfelt congratulations to the Academic Bowl team for their outstanding achievement.

GCA would also like to thank Saipan Southern High School and their NHS Chapter for hosting this event.

For more information regarding GCA you may call (670) 322-3320. **(PR)**

OIA announces \$2.3M in FY 2024 funds for Four Atoll Healthcare, APIPA

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs has announced \$2,330,225 in fiscal year 2024 Technical Assistance Program funding that will go toward supporting healthcare in the Marshall Islands and public auditors in the Pacific.

“Every year OIA provides funding to support healthcare for families and communities from the four nuclear-affected atolls, a program we have supported for many years now as a critical piece of our ongoing support to the Marshall Islands,” said assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. “This year we are also supporting the APIPA’s efforts to conduct peer and quality control review of their operations across the islands, a critical role given the important levels of federal funds that are provided to the islands.”



The two programs announced today are:

- Republic of the Marshall Islands — \$2,240,225

Funds will support primary and special health care services in the RMI for communities of the four nuclear-affected atolls of Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrik.

- Association of Pacific Islands Public Auditors—\$90,000

Funds will support the 2024-2025 external peer review and quality control review of 10 of the 13 APIPA member offices, which are American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia national government, and the four FSM state governments of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap, as detailed in the Jan. 15, 2024, proposal.



PUBLIC NOTICE

The United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA-NASS), in collaborations with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division (DOC-CSD) will begin visits in mid-March 2024 to all farms on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian to conduct the CNMI 2023 Census of Agriculture data collection.

Response to the Census of Agriculture is required by Federal Law, under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113 and as well as the CNMI 1990 Statistical Act Public Law 7-35.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Roy Doria Balanque]	FCD-DI CIVIL
Petitioner,]	ACTION NO. 23-0215
]	
vs.]	SUMMONS FOR
]	PUBLICATION
Noeme Lucerna]	
Balanque]	
Respondent,]	
]	



TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT: NOEME LUCERNA BALANQUE

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 7623 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 14th day of February, 2024.

_____/s/_____
Clerk of Court



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-24-020

SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF LUBE OILS FOR POWER GENERATION (CUC SAIPAN, TINIAN, ROTA)

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the supply and delivery of engine lubricating oils for CUC Power Generation facilities on Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

The IFB Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set. The IFB package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-service will be provided via email to the registered email ID. Prospective bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies, in a sealed envelope marked “CUC-IFB-24-020, Supply & Delivery of Lube Oils for Power Generation” to the **CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building**, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 11, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. An electronic copy should also be emailed to Marcela Tenorio via email, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

All Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility for any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements during the Contractor’s preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, pay any cost incurred in preparing the bid under this request, procure or contract for services. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contract may be subject to the approval of CPUC and will not be effective until receipt of such approval.



All responses to this IFB should consider all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the proponent’s obligation upon award of a contract. Successful proponents must submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor’s Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 5, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org, and Marcela Tenorio, email address marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN, JR.
Purchasing Administrator



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-24-015

A-16 SEWER LIFT STATION UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the construction of the A-16 Sewer Lift Station Upgrade project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the installation of a new polymer pre-cast concrete wet well to replace the existing A-16 wet well; installation of OFCI submersible pumps and accessories; new aboveground valve station and appurtenances with concrete pad; installation of new bar screen to replace existing A-1 bar screen; rehabilitation of existing A-16 bar screen; installation of new gravity sewer mains and manholes; installation of H2S controls; reconnection to existing lift station force main; procurement of a portable pumping system with trailer and concrete pad; installation of temporary bypass pumping operations and dewatering; site improvements with new chain-link fence, two vehicular gates and a pedestrian gate; asphaltic concrete pavement driveways with partial compacted base course area; installation of new and replacement of existing gate valves; demolition of existing minor structures and electrical upgrade. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **February 27, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “CUC-IFB-24-015, A-16 SEWER LIFT STATION UPGRADE” to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) March 14, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

A **Bid Guarantee** of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond **executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety**. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidder. The Payment and Performance bond **must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety**. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 (ChST) on March 1, 2024** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Nicolette Villagomez, CUC’s Water/Wastewater Engineer - via email at nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org, and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician - via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

KagHS students share their knowledge of tourism

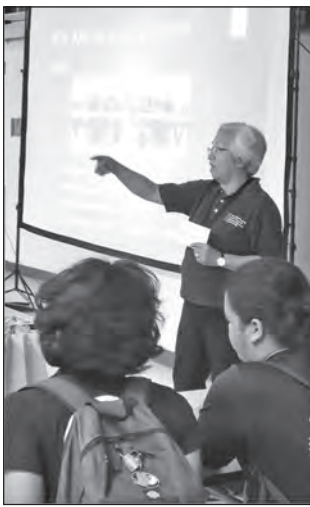
In their ongoing educational presentations to local schools this school year, Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority were delighted to find students at Kagman High School well-versed in the basics of the Marianas tourism industry.

Students were able to name the top source markets of visitors pre-COVID (South Korea, China, and Japan) and post-COVID (South Korea), identify the main activity visitors want to experience when visiting the islands (enjoy nature), describe the connection between tourist arrivals and revenue generation and job creation, and

share other important facts.

“Kagman High students offered intelligent and respectful participation during last Feb. 28’s outreach, and it was a delight to dialogue with them,” said MTEC chair Vicky Benavente. “After about a decade of these school presentations, MTEC and the MVA are seeing that today’s students are more aware, more informed, and more inspired about tourism than when we started. And we appreciate their support of the industry by being hospitable, keeping the Marianas clean and ‘green,’ sharing their culture, and in other ways.”

In line with this year’s school outreach theme, “Green



MTEC

Marianas Tourism Education Council chair Vicky Benavente shares pathways to career in tourism at Kagman High School during the educational outreach presentation of MTEC and the Marianas Visitors Authority on Feb. 28, 2024, at the school.

Spaces, Memorable Places/ Kämpun Betdi, Kämpun Rikuetdu/Llingil Leyil Walúwal,” MTEC is inviting students to put themselves in the shoes of a tourist enjoying the Marianas’ natural environment.

The outreach team aims to engage 4th graders, 7th grad-

ers, and 10th graders this year on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota with information and activities highlighting the Marianas’ primary economic driver, how it impacts their lives, and ways students can support tourism even at a young age. The presentation also includes an overview of programs and activities of the MVA, including its annual signature events like this month’s Tinian Hot Pepper Festival and Saipan Marathon 2024 on March 9.

Benavente was joined by MTEC board member Catherine Perry and MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda at the presentation. Other MTEC board members are vice chair Glenn Policare (Kanoa Resort), secretary Martin Duenas (MVA), treasurer Larissa Larson, Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero (Northern Marianas College), Larry Lee, Naomi Nishimura (CNMI Public School System), Gordon Marciano (PDI), and Dr. Yunzi Zhang (Northern Marianas College).

Schools interested in start-



MTEC

Marianas Visitor Authority Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda shares with Kagman High School students some of the marketing strategies of the agency during the educational outreach presentation of the MVA and Marianas Tourism Education Council on Feb. 28, 2024, at the school.

ing a MY WAVE Club to jaranda@mymarianas.com or engage students with tourism (670) 664-3200 for more information may contact Aranda at formation. (PR)

CNMI DOL to launch revamped website

As part of the continuing efforts to empower the CNMI’s workforce and support the CNMI business community, the CNMI Department of Labor, in collaboration with CNMI OSHA On-Site Consultation Division, will launch a new website that includes a new interface and look.

Starting on March 5, 2023, community members will be asked to log on to labor.cnmi.gov instead of marianaslabor.net.

This new website features easier access to essential information on occupational safety and health regulations, allowing CNMI OSHA to share updates, guidelines, and educational resources.

A dedicated news section provides real-time updates on the latest developments in safety and health. The website streamlines services, making it convenient for businesses to request a consultation visit with a click of a button; and the mobile compatibility allows for these services to be available across various devices.

The website will also provide new and improved access to important labor resources from all the CNMI Department of Labor Divisions. Jobseekers and business owners can continue to access forms for all the divisions, from the Administrative Hearing Office to the Workforce List template for the quarterly Census of Employment submission. It will also continue to provide links to reports and other labor resources.

A major new feature is the CNMI Job Board—a modern and user-friendly platform for job seekers and employers, both public and private. The job board replaces the previous job

vacancy announcement, or JVA, system. It allows applicants to easily search for and apply for open positions and enables companies to reach a wide pool of candidates—all with a new and improved user interface, including access on mobile devices.

All businesses that currently rely on the old site must make note that any new JVAs must be posted on the new site starting March 5. The old site will remain online for viewing only, until the last JVA opening date passes. The old site will be taken offline after that date.

The transition to the new website will be seamless, with the old marianaslabor.net address automatically redirecting users. However, if there are any questions or technical issues, the department can be reached at info@dol.gov.mp.

“Our new website and job board will greatly improve the services we provide for the people of the CNMI by enhancing access to vital labor information,” said Employment Services director Eugene Tebuteb. “We encourage all job seekers and employers to visit our new website and sign up for the job board and newsletter to stay up-to-date.”

As part of the transition, instructional videos on how to use the new interface will be emailed to current registered users and made available on the site and our various social media for all users. Additionally, there will be outreach events scheduled with opportunities for face-to-face training for job applicants and business owners using the site. Those dates will be announced soon and will be available to share on CNMI DOL’s social media pages (@cnmidol). (PR)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF EASYCALL CNMI, LLC

EASYCALL CNMI LLC,
a Limited Liability Company, (“LLC”),

Please take notice that EASYCALL CNMI, LLC., a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands corporation was dissolved effective July 31st, 2023.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS CNMI GOVERNMENT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP NO.: DPW24-RFP No.: 42400058

SUBMISSION DATE: March 27, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“Engineering and Design Related Services Coastal Retreat for Atkins-Kroll Intersection and Dotse Place, Saipan”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **February 27, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **March 14, 2024**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 20, 2024** to **Mr. George C. Sablan, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
Secretary, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: February 29, 2024 CLOSING DATE: March 15, 2024 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:
2024-006	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	\$90,000.00 to \$100,000.00 per annum (UNGRADED)

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at the NMHC website at www.nmhc.gov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Statewide Independent Living Council “Yes I Can!”

P.O. BOX 501521, SAIPAN, MP 96950; TEL: (670) 322-6537/8 FAX: (670) 322-6536 TTY: (670) 322-6449; E-MAIL: nmidir@ovrgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §9910, the public is advised that the Statewide Independent Living Council will hold its FY 2024 First General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, March 06, 2024 – 10:00a – 1:30pm Venue: Aqua Resort Club – Paluma Room Interested individuals are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda of March 06, 2024
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes of the FY 2023 Statewide Independent Living Council Joint Meeting with SRC on September 21, 2023.
- V. Reports
 - a. SILC Chairperson
 - b. CLI Executive Director
 - c. OVR Director
- VI. Old Business
 - a. State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) Update
- VII. New Business
- VIII. Announcements/Miscellaneous
- IX. Adjournment

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend the meeting but require accommodations such as large print or sign language interpreters are asked to call James M. Rayphand, OVR Director at 322-6537/6538 or email jimbo@ovrgov.net for necessary arrangements in advance before the meeting date.

/s/ Nicolas DLC Torres, SILC Chairperson

Publication of this notice is paid for by federal funds made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Human and Health Services, Assisted Community Living, Grant #2301MPLSG.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950**Mark Rabago** EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A better border battle: Biden, not Trump, has real immigration solutions

In dueling visits to the Texas-Mexico border, President Joe Biden and Donald Trump each tried to make the case that they're the person best positioned to handle immigration amid polls showing voters trust the latter more despite his chaotic and sadistic tenure presiding over the nation's enforcement infrastructure.

Biden should use this as a definitive breaking-off point to differentiate himself from Trump, not in who can be the toughest, but who can craft real solutions to benefit the country.

The answers aren't at the Rio Grande, they are at the Potomac. Going to the border to look around is not going to give anyone policy information that they couldn't get from a brief, particularly the current and former U.S. president (not that Trump was known to really read briefs anyway).

That goes double for touring with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, as Trump did; Abbott's main contribution to the immigration policy landscape over the last two years has been mainly an aggressive campaign to push the boundaries of the law and wrestle control from the federal government itself.

Ideally, what these visits could do is give the candidates a feel for the realities on the ground, far away from the chattering of the New York Post and Fox News—a border that is by all metrics very well guarded, by the Border Patrol and its arsenal of technologies including drones and sensor towers.

Many migrants are actually seeking to turn themselves in, asking for asylum protections under the law; if these processes are chaotic or too open-ended, it is because of the failures of our own bureaucratic and legal systems, not anything these asylum seekers did.

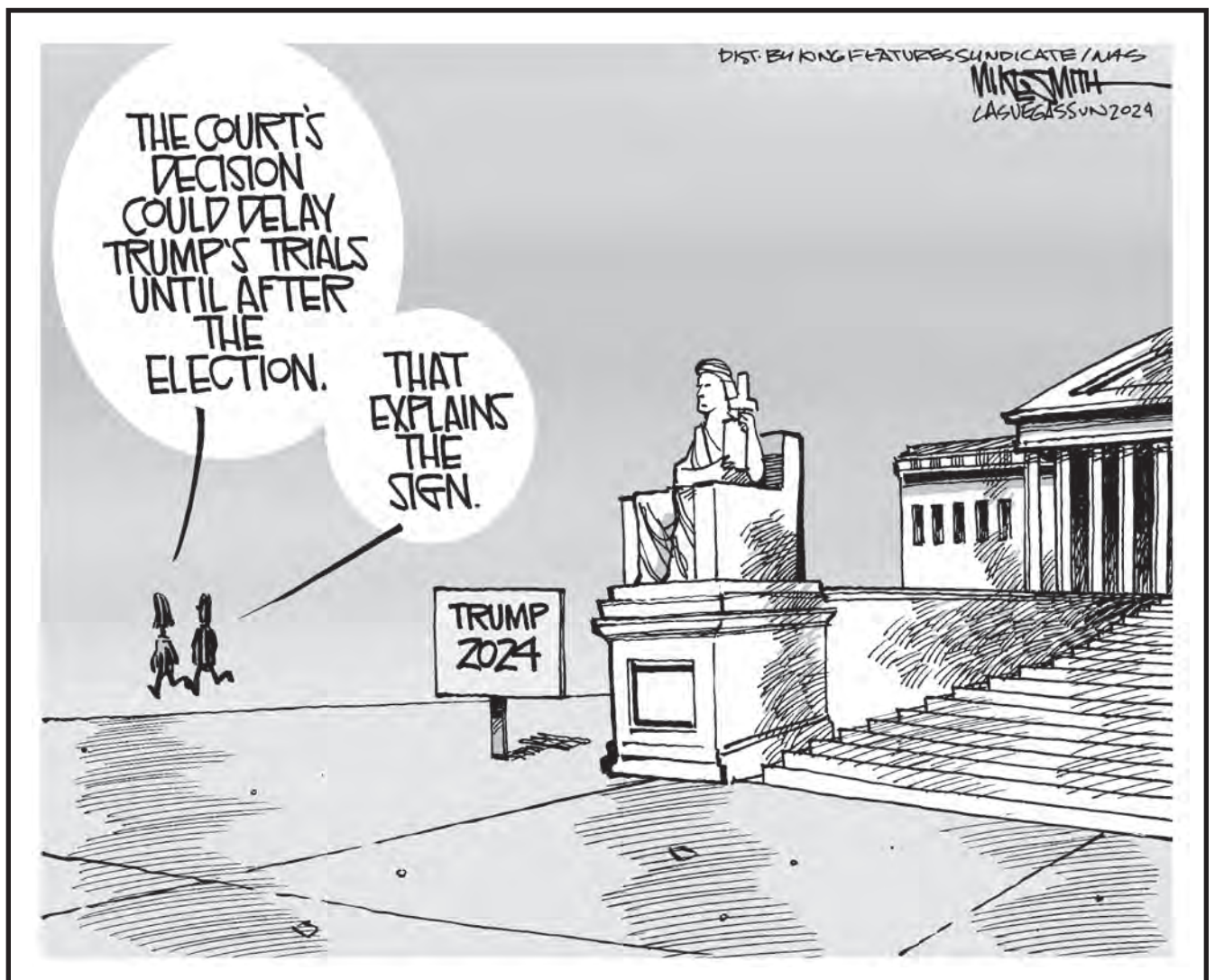
These campaign stops are political statements, and in the current context the statement is that the candidates are taking the issue seriously; that's good, because it's serious business. Yet if Biden is bewildered by finding himself constantly on defense, that's because he's yielded the field to Trump's wild accusations about some nonexistent surge in migrant crime and seeing measured bipartisan congressional negotiations be torpedoed by Trump for electoral reasons.

If Biden wants to own this issue, the president should understand that he can't and shouldn't try to out-Trump Trump, nor will entreaties for Trump to "join me" in developing policy—as he said during his visit to Brownsville—do much for a man who only cares about spectacle and his personal self-aggrandizement.

Biden must stake out an alternate path, his own path that will use the significant levers of power available to a U.S. president to actually help the states and localities receiving migrants and continue to respect the humanity of the latter.

He can act to fund case management and migrant services, coordinate placements of migrants to places around the country where they're desperately needed to plug labor force gaps,

See BETTER on Page 9



Alabama, religious freedom and frozen embryos

The Alabama Constitution provides that “no religion shall be established by law” and that “the civil rights, privileges, and capacities of any citizen shall not be in any manner affected by his religious principles.” Those prohibitions were forcefully reinforced in a 1998 Religious Freedom Amendment. Like similar provisions of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, those prohibitions are designed to ensure a democratic form of government in Alabama, instead of the theocratic form that roiled the European societies from which early American settlers fled.

Against the historical and textual backdrop of those provisions, it is, to put it mildly, surprising to read the concurring opinion of Alabama Chief Justice Tom Parker in *LePage v. The Center for Reproductive Medicine, P.C.* That now well-known case involved application of Alabama’s Wrongful Death of a Minor Act to the accidental destruction of embryos created through in vitro fertilization and stored in what the court described as a “cryogenic nursery.”

The court ruled that the law applied to the embryos and provided a pathway to financial recovery for their destruction. All members of the court agreed that “an unborn child is a genetically unique human being whose life begins at fertilization and ends at death.” Consequently, five of the six justices agreed that a fertilized human egg is a “minor child” covered by the act, regardless of the child’s viability or stage of development.

Parker’s concurring opinion reveals that he viewed the court’s decision as a launching pad for exploration of the Sanctity of Unborn Life Amendment, which was adopted in 2018. “Sanctity,” the chief justice said, meant “godliness.” While some “advocates of the sanctity of life have attempted to articulate the principle on purely secular philosophical grounds,” he observed, “[t]he common usage of this phrase [refers] to the view that all human beings bear God’s image from the moment of conception.”

But the chief justice made it clear that “common usage” was not a fundamental key to proper interpretation and application of the phrase. Instead, and after quoting extensively from the 17th century theologian Petrus van Mastricht, the 17th century Geneva Bible, Thomas Aquinas, the Book of Genesis, John Calvin and the Sixth Commandment, he asserted that the Bible and other religious texts supplied that key.

As a result, Parker explained, the cited texts incorporated into

By JAMES MCHUGH
The Fulcrum

James McHugh is a board member of *Lawyers Defending American Democracy* and a former *Massachusetts Appeals Court justice*.



Alabama law the proposition that “(1) God made every person in His image; (2) each person therefore has a value that far exceeds the ability of human beings to calculate; and (3) human life cannot be wrongfully destroyed without incurring the wrath of a holy God, who views destruction of his image as an affront to Himself.” Consequently, he continued, the word “sanctity” in the Sanctity of Life Amendment means that “even before birth, all human beings bear the image of God, and their lives cannot be destroyed without defacing His glory.”

Summing up those observations, the chief justice concluded his opinion by saying that “[t]he People of Alabama have declared the public policy of this State to be that unborn human life is sacred. We believe that each human being, from the moment of conception, is made in the image of God, created by Him to reflect His likeness. It is as if the People of Alabama took what was spoken of the prophet Jeremiah and applied it to every unborn person in this state: ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you were born I sanctified you.’ Jeremiah 1:5 (NKJV 1982). All three branches of Government are subject to a constitutional mandate to treat each unborn human life with reverence. Carving out an exception for the people in this case, small as they were, would be unacceptable to the People of this State, who have required us to treat every human being in accordance with the fear of a holy God who made them in His image.”

That conclusion, of course, is fertilizer for a theocracy. It is difficult enough for the government to deal in democratic fashion with the often-difficult issues that lie at the intersection of individual autonomy, constitutional rights and public policy. But the democratic process and the tugs and pulls of and between citizens with interests in the outcome have, with a few notable exceptions, made it work for more than 200 years. Injecting religion into that process dramatically reduces the likelihood that the process will continue to produce useful results.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The battle between good and evil rages on

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “the first lesson of history is the good of evil.” A contrary statement, but one that describes the impetus that must often take place to move people and nations to action. Such a time is now. As children, we read stories of heroes and villains pitted in the struggle between good and evil. Cinderella and her evil stepmother; the heroes in the “Narnia” series and the White Witch; Mowgli and Shere Khan in “The Jungle Book,” Peter Pan and Captain Hook. On and on. Disney movies also brought fairy tales to a whole generation on the big and small screens. But rarely, even in those cartoon depictions, was evil defeated without sacrifice.

Perhaps we were more attuned to the struggle between such opposing forces as children, our perceptions stored away with other childish things. Yet, forces for good and for evil play out every day in our lives. For evidence, we need look no further than the daily news.

In our politically correct world, it is tempting to deny this. That is, until evil becomes an imminent threat, too close, too powerful. Yet, how much better to confront it before it runs rampant — as in Hitler’s Nazi Germany, as now in Ukraine.

We have a son, adopted from St. Petersburg, Russia. He was brought home just weeks before Vladimir Putin abruptly closed adoptions to the United States, an act of political retaliation for freezing Russian assets. (Read “Red Notice” by Bill Browder for a stunning story of the struggle between good and evil in Putin’s corrupt Russia.)

When adopting from Russia, three visits are required as well as

suitcases of presents and money — presents over the table, money under it. When Putin closed adoptions in 2011, hundreds of orphans lost their chance at a home and a life. Older children especially were painfully aware of their loss; their prospective parents had met them, likely twice, and they were waiting only to go to their new homes.

Orphans punished, parents brokenhearted, millions of dollars lost. There is not much more one needs to know about Vladimir Putin.

As the years have gone by, Putin has only grown more openly ruthless. His illegal invasions of Ukraine (first Crimea in 2014, and then the rest of the country two years ago) is evidence enough.

It is well past time to recognize him for the villain he is.

We also have a son adopted from Ukraine. In April 2022, Khar'kov, in the northeastern part of the country, was bombed. We watched on the national news as the children from Orphanage #4, where our son was, were evacuated.

Again, orphans. Always the innocent. Always those without resources to fight. That is how bullies operate. That is how evil flourishes.

In the United States, we will not tolerate bullying in schools. It is time we take that intolerance to the world’s “playground.”

Alexei Navalny, who crusaded against Russian corruption and staged massive anti-Kremlin demonstrations, died Feb. 16 in Russia’s Arctic penal colony. He was 47. He had returned to Moscow of his own volition from Germany, where he had been recovering from nerve agent poisoning, blamed on the Kremlin.

Navalny returned to Russia because he was courageous,

By AMY LOCKARD

The Fulcrum

Amy Lockard is an Iowa resident who regularly contributes to regional newspapers and periodicals. She is working on the second of a four-book fictional series based on Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*.



because he cared about his people and because he valued freedom over even his own life.

“Virtue is bold and goodness never fearful,” wrote Shakespeare.

President Joe Biden, along with many members of Congress from both the left and the right, have joined world leaders in blaming Putin, and the rotten political system he commands, for Navalny’s untimely death. Yet many shamefully have not.

It is past time to stop the disgraceful antics of some in Congress and the political finagling. It is past time we move beyond partisanship, fund Ukraine and continue to aid in their struggle.

In all the stories of all the great battles ever told, from the earliest literature to the Bible to “Star Wars,” the storyline is the same. The fight is ultimately between evil and good, between darkness and light.

We must channel our early understanding of the world. We know evil when we see it. We knew it as children; we know it now.

Let us be on the side of the light.

Donald Trump is ruthlessly transactional to the detriment of our nation

President Joe Biden may be old and forgetful of some dates and details. But about some really big and critical issues facing America and the world, he has been sharp as a tack and consistently focused and engaged.

He has been a most consequential president in pushing significant money to tackle the mounting threat of climate disruption. Likewise, he is correct that it is in America’s critical national security interest to honor our NATO alliance and to aid the Ukrainian people against Russia’s aggression.

In February, the Senate came close to passing a long negotiated bill—a \$118 billion bipartisan package to send aid to Ukraine and Israel, coupled with significantly increased funding for heightened security along our border with Mexico. This bill was painstakingly negotiated by Republican and Democratic senators, and it gave Republican leaders almost everything they had wanted.

It died when Donald Trump made it clear that he did not want to give Biden any win and that he wants problems at the border to continue so that he can use the “chaos” as a key campaign issue. He plans to hammer Biden on the problem that he, Trump, has cynically sustained. Good of the country be damned.

Two weeks ago, the Senate backtracked and passed a \$95 billion foreign aid bill to support Ukraine and Israel and humanitarian aid to Palestinians and others. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and 21 other Republican senators joined the Democrats in passing this bill. But House Speaker Mike Johnson refused to even bring the Senate bill to the House for a vote.

Trump has commanded there be no vote, and Johnson is an obedient servant. Again, if doing something makes Biden or the

Democrats look effective, then the action must be killed, even if it’s passage of critical legislation that is needed to help the Ukrainian people hold off Russian aggression. Forget about the good of our nation or the international order.

And recently, Trump remarkably went even further by using a familiar page from his playbook of attacking NATO. Our support for NATO has been a bipartisan lodestar across the decades. Rather than respecting that history and the power of this alliance, Trump fixates on the fact that some NATO members are not living up to their commitment to raise their defense spending to at least 2% of their gross domestic product. He misses the forest and obsesses about one little tree.

Trump loves to make headlines, and he got them by stating that the United States will not come to the aid of these negligent NATO nations if they are attacked, saying, “‘You didn’t pay? ... I would not protect you. In fact, I would encourage (the Russians) to do whatever the hell they want.’”

Though Trump has stated that if elected he might be a dictator for only one day, he already is controlling and killing critical federal legislation. He is facing 91 indictments and massive financial penalties, and he kills border bills and foreign aid to Ukraine and threatens our oldest and closest allies. He does this because he is enabled to do it by leaders who place their fealty to him over the good of the country and the world. It must all be part of “making America great again.”

To understand where Trump is coming from, it is important to remember that his book, ghost-written, is titled “Trump: The Art of the Deal.” Trump, the product of a hyper-business family in-

By WILLIAM FRENCH

Chicago Tribune

William French is an associate professor of theology at Loyola University Chicago with an emphasis on global security, environmental ethics, and war and peace studies.



involved in New York real estate development, sees reality through strictly business, financial and “deal” terms. For him, deal-making involves winners and losers, and he hates to lose.

Trump’s attention is always transactional; every issue—such as domestic or foreign policy—is a deal. He has no interest in, or sense of, history, so he never imagines that it might be important to think of impacts years, decades or centuries into the future. Relationships are transactional and rooted in his calculation of short-term gain. The focus is immediate—his next trial or his upcoming election. There is no evidence that Trump ever thinks about how future generations might fare.

Trump’s niece, Mary, a clinical psychologist, agrees with others that Trump has a narcissistic personality disorder. So it should not be a surprise that a Trump-first vision of reality would cash out into an “America First” agenda that is disdainful of worrying about our allies or participating in the broader world community.

George Washington’s warning in his farewell address to the nation at the end of his two terms as our first president might be instructive for us. In his eight years as president, he saw the corrosive energies of political leaders’ lust for power. He warned of the potential for “frightful despotism” and parties creating “disorders and miseries” that gradually “incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an Individual.”

Washington was trying to warn us about men such as Trump who seem to love autocratic rule.

BETTER

From page 8

and point squarely to the data showing that immigration has almost single-handedly stopped the economy from sliding into recession.

Biden does not have to play on Trump’s turf. He’s right to urge Congress to act, but he should make clear that Democrats will seek to secure paths to citizenship for Dreamers, to reform work visas, to streamline asylum. Timidity has been a failing strategy. It’s time to go on the offensive.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Disappointing

It was disappointing to read the recent statement from OAG Criminal Division Chief Chester Hinds regarding the not guilty verdict in the criminal jury trial of Manuel A. Pinaula on a charge of sexual abuse of a minor.

Mr. Hinds wrote that “...the AGO does not agree...until our children and victims are believed, perpetrators of these crimes will continue to get away.” The implication of this statement was that the defendant was actually culpable and “got away” with the abuse because of the poor (unanimous) judgment of the jury, and that accusations of sexual abuse should always be believed.

Then why have trials? Juries should not ever convict a de-






fendant just because he is accused of a crime. Juries must assess the credibility of the witnesses and refuse to convict unless they are convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty. Of course the OAG “does not agree” when juries rule against it, but doesn’t that go without saying?

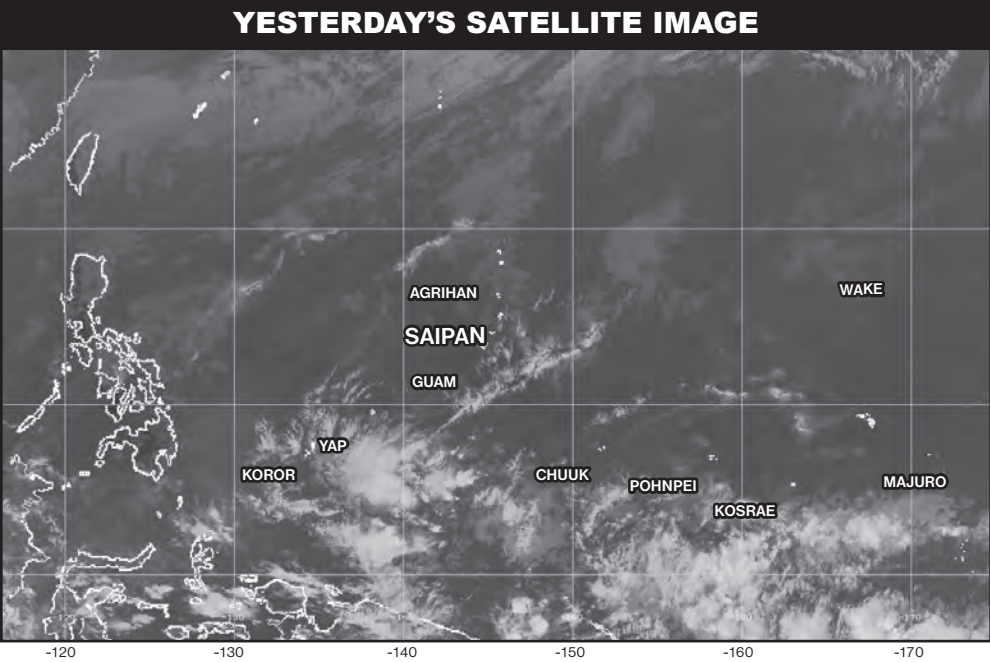
While it is extremely important that we protect minors from any sort of abuse, it is also important, and crucial to the rule of law, that juries carefully assess witness credibility and only convict defendants of crimes when the evidence presented by both sides demonstrates guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. An accusation by itself does not, and never should be all that is considered.

Bob O’Connor

via email

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.	
85	75°	85	74°	85	75°	85	75°	85	75°



Light to gentle east-northeast surface winds are reported across the forecast zones this morning. Satellite shows patchy low to mid-level clouds over the region, mainly near and northeast of Saipan and Tinian. Tanapag buoy shows combined seas in the 7 to 8 foot range, mainly from the north-northeast to northeast, and slowly subsiding. A shear line is far northwest of the CNMI and drifting slowly southward.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°	
Yap	Showers	85° / 78°	
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	85° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°	
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°	
Majuro	Showers	84° / 79°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Tuesday	6:31 AM	6:25 PM
Wednesday	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Thursday	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Friday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:46 AM	12:06 PM	-
Tuesday	1:45 AM	1:03 PM	-
Wednesday	2:45 AM	2:06 PM	-
Thursday	3:44 AM	3:11 PM	-
Friday	4:38 AM	4:16 PM	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2024

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
				7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

More UOG students taking pathway to mechanical engineering jobs

A year and a half since the start of a collaboration that allows University of Guam engineering students to attend their junior and senior years at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the first graduates are expected to receive diplomas by the end of this year. And more UOG first-year students and soph-

» Through partnership with UH Mānoa, Navy Shipyard

omores plan to take this career pathway.

Under a program called "2+2," students who completed the first two years of their engineering education at UOG can apply to UH Mānoa, carrying over their credits with them. At UH Mānoa, they can major in Mechanical Engineering and upon graduation they get a shot at jobs with the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in Hawaii and subsequently with the Shipyard's future detachment in Guam.



University of Guam president Anita Borja Enriquez, center, is joined by Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, left, and UOG senior vice president and provost Sharleen Santos-Bamba at the groundbreaking ceremony for the School of Engineering building at UOG on Dec. 15, 2023.

The Shipyard joins the partnership as it aims to grow a pool of local engineers and expand its ship repair capabilities into Guam.

"We are grateful to our partners for providing this excellent pathway for engineering students at the University of Guam to pursue a career in mechanical engineering on the island," said Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, UOG president. "We agree that our col-

lective partnership provides incredible value to support workforce development opportunities on Guam for our UOG graduates."

There are now seven engineering students from Guam at UH Mānoa, and four of them are in the Mechanical Engineering pathway, said Dr. Marvin Young, professor of Mechanical Engineering at UH Mānoa.

During his return visit to

UOG in early February 2024, following a visit when the partnership was launched in 2022, Young said he received feedback from 15 UOG freshmen and sophomore students that they also plan to take the 2+2 career path.

Clifford Imamura, a Guam representative for Pearl Harbor Naval Ship-

yard, joined Young in the recent meeting with UOG's engineering students.

UOG's Pre-engineering Program evolved into a four-year Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering Program in 2019. The first 12 graduates from the Civil Engineering program graduated in December 2021.

The UOG School of Engineering welcomed 170 declared Civil Engineering majors in Academic Year 2022-2023.

UOG held a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the \$7.9-million, 16,500-square-foot School of Engineering Building on Dec. 15, 2023. (PR)



Dean Brennan Morioka, of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's College of Engineering, center, and Dr. Marvin Young, professor in UH Mānoa's Department of Mechanical Engineering, fourth from left, meet with Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, president of the University of Guam, and others in September 2022 to kick off their partnership that also includes the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

Community invited to celebrate UOG Charter Day and Homecoming on March 7



Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, seated, front center, is joined by UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez, right, academic administrators, students, and staff during the ceremony at the Office of the Governor's main conference room at Adelup proclaiming March as Charter Day Month for UOG.

The public is invited to the University of Guam's 56th Charter Day celebration on Thursday, March 7.

The festivities start at 9:30am with the opening ceremony in the Center Courtyard and will feature a fun-filled day with food trucks, arts and crafts vendors, games, and activities for the whole family. Dunk your professor, check out the hut-building competition, see cultural presentations, and explore the UOG campus with tours of the Marine Lab, a virtual aquifer, a "Guam Rocks" display, science programs, and more.

This year's theme, "Tulos Mo'na: Propelling Forward in Unison," captures the spirit of the University of Guam's progress and its role in delivering public value as an engine of progress through its mission of "Ina, Deskubre, Setbe—To Enlighten, To

Discover, To Serve."

This 56th Charter Day celebration marks the anniversary of the signing of the charter that renamed the Territorial College of Guam to the University of Guam in 1968.

In support of UOG's celebration, Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero signed a proclamation on Friday, March 1, declaring March 7 as the University of Guam Charter Day and the month of March as UOG Charter Day Month.

"Since its founding, UOG has conferred over 20,000 bachelor's and master's degrees to graduates who serve as the foundation of our island's and region's professional workforce and who strengthen our economy as they establish themselves in businesses and in the community as accountants, scientists, nurses, teachers, entrepreneurs, social workers,



Food trucks and other vendors are seen during the 55th Charter Day celebration at the University of Guam on March 7, 2023.

engineers, and many other specialties," the governor's proclamation states in part.

UOG president Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez and a team of administrators, staff, and students joined the governor at Adelup.

Enriquez thanked the UOG Community and its network of supporters for helping to

lift the university to what is today, with its expanding role in nationally recognized research initiatives and in developing a diversified professional workforce in Guam and the region.

"We always get asked the question: What would our island be without the university? There's so much pride



Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, center, signs a proclamation designating March as the University of Guam's Charter Day Month. UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez, right, and UOG senior vice president and provost Sharleen Santos-Bamba, applaud the governor during the ceremony at the Office of the Governor's main conference room at Adelup Friday, March 1.

because of the heightened level and depth of initiatives that truly support the fabric of our society at a social and economic level," Enriquez said at the proclamation signing. "So there's so much more that we're doing."

Enriquez commended UOG's 62nd Student Government Association for taking the lead in organizing Charter Day events.

More than 1,000 elementary to high school students are expected to make their way to UOG on field trips for campus tours.

Traffic route

During Charter Day, there will be one-way traffic on campus from 7:30am to 12pm. Vehicles can only enter the campus through University Drive near the electronic billboard. Vehicles can exit through the

back gate next to the Calvo Field House.

Blue Night 2024: Homecoming

It's a full day of celebration as Charter Day continues into the evening with Blue Night 2024: Homecoming, starting at 6pm in the Center Courtyard.

Bring your family for an exciting evening of activities with entertainment, food trucks, and music featuring The John Dank Show, Straight Up Jed, Jonah Hanom, and more!

Triton Alumni can visit the Alumni Booth to get a free T-shirt or UOG "Balutatan" Bag and a chance to win some great prizes!

For more information about Charter Day and to view the schedule of activities, visit www.uog.edu/charterday. (PR)

Business

Docomo announces winner of Prepaid Car Giveaway

» Kikulane Pangelinan drives home a 2024 Mazda 3 Sport

Docomo Pacific is thrilled to announce the lucky winner of its Prepaid Car Giveaway, held last Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024. Among the many excited participants, Kikulane Pangelinan, was selected at random as the proud recipient of a brand new 2024 Mazda 3 Sport.

The Prepaid Car Giveaway, an initiative designed to celebrate and reward Docomo Pacific's valued Prepaid subscribers, garnered enthusiastic participation from the community. Kikulane Pangelinan's excitement was shared as she drove away in her sleek new Mazda 3 Sport, courtesy of Docomo Pacific.

"We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Kikulane Pangelinan on becoming the recipient of our first ever Docomo Pacific Prepaid Car Giveaway.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Docomo Pacific store manager Shane Deleon Guerrero, junior production artist Peter Matagolai, Prepaid coordinators Joaquin Duenas and Richard Mendiola, Direct Sales representative Damali Wasser, Docomo Pacific 2024 Prepaid Car giveaway winner Kikulane Pangelinan, Customer Service representative lead Therese Santos, and Senior Consumer manager Nicole Babauta.

This was a tremendous success, and we're grateful for the overwhelming response from our subscribers," said Docomo Pacific Senior Consumer manager Nicole Babauta.

The giveaway is part of Docomo Pacific's commitment to creating memorable experiences for its customers. The company is dedicated to enhancing the lives of its subscribers and expressing gratitude for their ongoing support.

"We want to express our sincere appreciation to all our subscribers who participated in the Prepaid Car Giveaway. Your enthusiasm and loyalty make events like these truly special and Better Together," said Docomo Pacific brand manager Brent Deleon Guerrero.

As Docomo Pacific continues to prioritize customer satisfaction, subscribers are encouraged to stay tuned to the company's social media pages for future exciting giveaways and opportunities to engage with the brand. (PR)

Head Start preschools aim to fight poverty, but teachers struggle to make ends meet

WASHINGTON (AP)—In some ways, Doris Milton is a Head Start success story. She was a student in one of Chicago's inaugural Head Start classes, when the antipoverty program, which aimed to help children succeed by providing them a first-rate preschool education, was in its infancy.

Milton loved her teacher so much that she decided to follow in her footsteps. She now works as a Head Start teacher in Chicago.

After four decades on the job, Milton, 63, earns \$22.18 an hour. Her pay puts her above the poverty line, but she is far from financially secure. She needs a dental procedure she cannot afford, and she is paying down \$65,000 of student loan debt from National Louis University, where she came within two classes of getting her bachelor's degree. She dropped out in 2019 when she fell ill.

"I'm trying to meet their needs when nobody's meeting mine," Milton said of teaching preschoolers.

Head Start teachers—70% of whom have bachelor's degrees—earn \$39,000 a year on average, far less than public school teachers with similar credentials. President Joe Biden wants to raise their pay, but Congress has no plans to expand the Head Start budget.

Many have left the job—about one in five teachers turned over in 2022—for higher-paying positions at restaurants or in retail. But if Head Start centers are required to raise teacher pay without additional money, operators say

they would have to cut how many kids they serve.

The Biden administration says the program is already turning kids away because so many teachers have left, and not enough workers are lining up to take their places. And officials say it does not make sense for an anti-poverty program, where people of color make up 60% of the workforce, to underpay its employees.

"We have some teachers who are making poverty wages themselves, which undermines the original intent of the program," said Katie Hamm, a deputy assistant secretary in the Office of Early Childhood Development.

Head Start, created as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty," serves some of the neediest children, including those who are homeless, in foster care or come from households falling below the federal poverty line. With child care prices exceeding college tuition in many states, Head Start is the only option within financial reach for many families.

The Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the program, estimates a pay hike would not have a huge effect on the number of children served because so many programs already struggle to staff all their classrooms. Altogether, Head Start programs receive enough funding to cover the costs of 755,000 slots. But many programs can't fully enroll because they don't have enough teachers. It's

why the department estimates only about 650,000 of those slots are getting filled.

The proposed change would force Head Start programs to downsize permanently because they would not be able to afford as many teachers.

That worries Head Start leaders, even though many of them back raising pay for their employees, said Tommy Sheridan, deputy director for the National Head Start Association. The association asked the Biden administration to allow some programs to opt out of the requirements.

"We love this idea, but it's going to cost money," Sheridan said. "And we don't see Congress appropriating that money overnight."

While a massive cash infusion does not appear forthcoming, other solutions have been proposed.

On Monday, the Biden administration published a letter urging school districts to direct more of the federal money they receive toward early learning, including Head Start.

On Thursday, U.S. Reps. Mikie Sherrill, D-N.J., and Juan Ciscomani, R-Ariz., filed a bill that would allow Head Start to hire community college students who are working toward their associate degrees in child development.

The stakes are perhaps highest for rural Head Starts. A program outside of Anchorage, Alaska, is closing one of its five sites while struggling with a shortage of workers. Program director Mark Lackey said the heart-wrenching decision al-

lowed him to raise pay for the remaining workers in hopes of reducing staff turnover.

"It hurts, and we don't want to do it," Lackey said. "But at the same time, it feels like it's kind of necessary."

Overall, his program has cut nearly 100 slots because of a staffing shortage. And the population he serves is high-need: About half the children are homeless or in foster care. The Biden proposal could force the program to contract further.

Amy Esser, the executive director of Mercer County Head Start in rural western Ohio, said it's been difficult to attract candidates to fill a vacant teaching position because of the low pay. Starting pay at Celina City Schools is at least \$5,000 more than at Head Start, and the jobs require the same credentials.

But she warned hiking teacher pay could have disastrous consequences for her program, and for the broader community, which has few child care options for low-income households.

"We would be cut to extinction," Esser wrote in a letter to the Biden administration, "leaving children and families with little to no opportunity for a safe, nurturing environment to achieve school readiness."

Arlisa Gilmore, a longtime Head Start teacher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, said if it were up to her, she would not sacrifice any slots to raise teacher pay. She makes \$25 an hour and acknowledges she's lucky: She collects rental income from a home she owns and shares expenses with her husband. The children in her class-

room are not so fortunate.

"I don't think they should cut classrooms," Gilmore said. "We have a huge community of children that are in poverty in my facility."

Milton, the Chicago teacher,

wonders why there has to be such a difficult trade-off at all.

"Why can't it be, 'Let's help both'? Why do we got to pick and choose?" Milton said. "Do we not deserve that? Don't the kids deserve that?"

BUSINESS BRIEFS

WTO ends meeting in UAE after failing to reach major agreements

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Negotiators taking part in a World Trade Organization meeting in the United Arab Emirates ended their summit early Saturday after failing to reach agreements on several major initiatives, the latest sign of turmoil within the global body. The WTO delayed its closing ceremony in Abu Dhabi by over a day as the 166-nation bloc struggled to reach consensus on fishing, agriculture and other issues. The only agreement of note came on extending a pause on taxes on digital media such as movies and video games. On that issue, the WTO decided to extend the pause until their next biennial meeting. WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala noted that the summit took place "against an international backdrop marked by greater uncertainty than at any time I can remember."

China pledges to increase opportunities for foreign companies

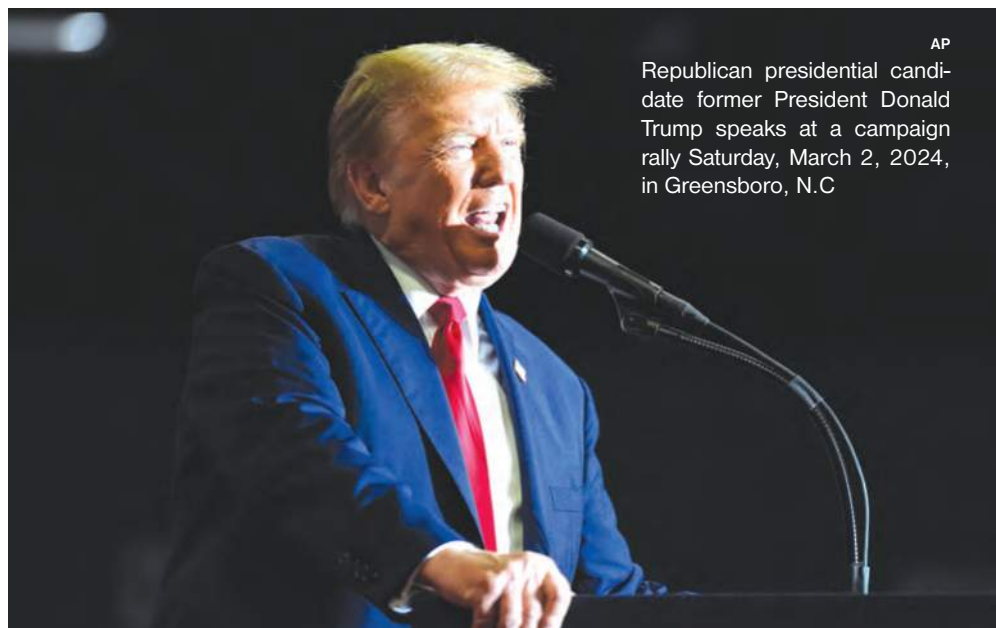
BEIJING (AP)—Chinese Vice President Han Zheng

pledged Friday to provide more opportunities for foreign companies in China as the government tries to restore confidence in the world's second largest economy. Han told an audience of American business people in Beijing that the government would continue to open up more industries to foreign investment and create a market-oriented and law-based international business environment. "China's development achievements have been made through opening up," he said at an American Chamber of Commerce in China banquet. "We will unwaveringly adhere to a high level of opening-up to the outside world." Chamber officials portrayed his appearance at the annual dinner as a positive signal that the government is serious about addressing the concerns of U.S. and other foreign companies about operating uncertainties and other challenges in the Chinese market. The U.S. and China remain divided on a wide range of issues from trade and technology to the war in Ukraine, but they are at least talking again and seeking ways to manage their differences.

Nation

IMMIGRATION RHETORIC ESCALATES

Trump now claims Biden trying to overthrow US



AP
Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Greensboro, N.C.

GREENSBORO, North Carolina (AP)—Former President Donald Trump on Saturday further escalated his immigration rhetoric and baselessly accused President Joe Biden of waging a “conspiracy to overthrow the United States of America” as he campaigned ahead of Super Tuesday’s primaries.

Trump has a long history of trying to turn attack lines back on his rivals in an attempt to diminish their impact. Biden has cast Trump as a threat to democracy, pointing to the former president’s efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Those efforts culminated in the attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as his supporters tried to halt the peaceful transition of power.

Trump, who has responded

by calling Biden “the real threat to democracy” and alleged without proof that Biden is responsible for the indictments he faces, turned to Biden’s border policies on Saturday, charging that “every day Joe Biden is giving aid and comfort to foreign enemies of the United States.”

“Biden’s conduct on our border is by any definition a conspiracy to overthrow the United States of America,” he went on to say in Greensboro, North Carolina. “Biden and his accomplices want to collapse the American system, nullify the will of the actual American voters and establish a new base of power that gives them control for generations.”

Similar arguments have long been made by people who allege Democrats are promoting

illegal immigration to weaken the power of white voters—part of a racist conspiracy, once confined to the far right, claiming there is an intentional push by the U.S. liberal establishment to systematically diminish the influence of white people.

Trump leaned into the theory again at his rally later in Virginia, saying of the migrants: “They’re trying to sign them up to get them to vote in the next election.”

“Once again Trump is projecting in an attempt to distract the American people from the fact he killed the fairest and toughest border security bill in decades because he believed it would help his campaign. Sad,” Biden campaign spokesman Ammar Moussa said in a statement.

more loss of life.” The massive fire has left a charred landscape of scorched prairie, dead cattle and destroyed as many as 500 structures, including burned-out homes, in the Texas Panhandle. It has merged with another fire and crossed the state line into Oklahoma, burning more than 1,700 square miles (4,400 square kilometers) and was 15% contained, the Texas A&M Forest Service said Saturday.

How clean is dirt on Hunter Biden? A key GOP source is charged with lying to FBI

WASHINGTON (AP)—Alexander Smimov was cast by Republicans as one of the FBI’s most trusted informants, offering a “highly credible” account of brazen public corruption by Joe Biden that formed a pillar of the House impeachment investigation of the Democratic president. Then, last month, the script changed dramatical-

ly. Smimov, 43, finds himself charged with lying to the FBI, accused of fabricating a tale of bribery and espionage involving then-Vice President Biden and the Ukrainian energy company Burisma, and he has told officials he has Russian intelligence contacts. It’s muddled the GOP inquiry plenty. Interviews and a review of public records by The Associated Press suggest this was not likely Smimov’s first turn in what the government says is a cycle as a fabulist. They offer a portrait of a businessman who operated a string of murky shell companies, ran with others who have been accused of fraud, and boasted of his own ties to the FBI. The episode highlights not only the perils of the Republicans’ reliance on unverified information in their quest to confront Biden but also the risks inherent in the FBI’s use of sometimes-unreliable informants who may have ulterior motives.

World

Ukraine’s troops rationing ammunition

WASHINGTON (AP)—Ukrainian drones fly without ammunition. Russian artillery unleash deadly volleys from safe positions beyond the range of Kyiv’s troops. Shortages of ammo and supplies are resulting in lost ground to Moscow, U.S. congressional leaders warn, yet the Republican-controlled House has shown little hurry to resupply Ukraine with military aid.

Across Washington, officials are viewing the drop-off in ammunition shipments with increasing alarm. It’s now been over two months

since the U.S.—which since World War II has fashioned itself as the “Arsenal of Democracy”—last sent military supplies to Ukraine.

But House Speaker Mike Johnson appears determined to chart his own course away from a \$95 billion foreign aid package passed by the Senate—a decision that could stall the package for weeks to come after an already arduous months-long wait in Congress.

With U.S. military shipments cut off, Ukrainian troops withdrew from the eastern city of Avdiivka last

month, where outnumbered defenders had withheld a Russian assault for four months. Delays in military support from the West are complicating the task for Kyiv’s military tacticians, forcing troops to ration ammunition and ultimately costing the lives of Ukrainian soldiers.

“If Ukraine gets the aid they will win. If they don’t get the aid they will lose—with dire consequences to the United States,” said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who visited Ukraine last week.



Peaceful Passage

†ANTONIO HOASHI BORJA

Born on May 8, 1954
Sailed to his new home with our Heavenly Father on
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at the age of 69.

Throughout his life, †Antonio (affectionately known as Ton) embodied humility, integrity, and generosity. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and cousin to his family. Widely admired, he leaves behind a legacy of respect and dignity for all who knew him. As a dedicated public servant, †Antonio held various government roles, including police officer, conservation officer, Vice Chairman of the 8th Tinian Municipal Council, and Chairman of the 12th Tinian Municipal Council. He passionately advocated for causes he believed would benefit the community. Known for his compassion and selflessness, †Antonio always prioritized other's needs. He faced life with resilience and optimism, tackling challenges head-on. His absence leaves a profound void in the lives of many.

As †Ton enters his new life, he is reunited and greeted by his:
Parents: †Antonio Shimabukuro Borja and †Petra Hoashi Borja
Son: †Nazario San Nicolas Borja
Father-in-Law: †Ramon Pangelinan San Nicolas
Mother-in-Law: †Consuelo Torres San Nicolas
Brothers: †Baltazar Hoashi Borja, †Joaquin Hoashi Borja, †Fidel Manglona, †Oscar M. King
Sister: †Elphidia Hoashi Borja
Brothers-in-Law: †Jose E. Taitano, †James Paris, †Evangelista Santiago
Sister-in-Law: †Elizabeth San Nicolas Taitano
Niece: †Billie Jean Borja Fujikawa
Nephew: †Baltazar Santos Borja Jr.

†Ton was happily married to his loving wife, Rosita San Nicolas Borja and was blessed with their children, grandchildren and families.
Anne Charlyn Shai (Francisco Jr. and Joelene (Kolene, Kainoa and Kalani), Kaisha and Nathan (Dwayne, Devin and Damien), Jean and Marielle (Wynter Airis, Willow Reign and Wendy Leigh), Linley, and Marley)
Donna Consuelo San Nicolas and Timothy

Sabang (Antonio Joseph and Chanele (Tyler Joseph, Risha Joan, Isabella Marie, Aria Rose, Drake Roque Greyson and Colton Ace), Juanito Ramon and Tayler (Madden Rayn), Maria Rosita, Jose Franco, Renae, Tiana and Ruben (May'lana, Noah, Jhenesmae, Adonis), Donavine (Sadie and Sage), Joseph, and Manny (Maija and Matua) Trixy San Nicolas Borja (Barton Luke Joseph, Peter Ray and Ritalind (Lareia Fae and Amila Blume), Lucas Jr., and Tierra Elarose) Patrino B. and Daniel Tremel (Pulani Consuelo, Rebecca Violet, and Daniel Joseph) †Nazario San Nicolas Borja and Patricia H. Aguon (Madison Rose, Rosita Mae, Maleah Grace, Nazario Jr., and Ezekiel John) Germaine San Nicolas Borja Antonio San Nicolas Borja Jr. and Miguel Arroyo Jr.

He will be missed by:
Step Mother: Hua Bie Borja

Brothers and Sisters:
Maria Bernadita H. Borja and family
Jose H. and Ramona Margarita A. Borja and family
Vicente H. and Ma. Jene A. Borja and family
Rosita H. Santiago and family

Brothers and Sisters-in-Law:
Esperanza S. Borja and family
Teodoro H. Aricheta Sr. and family
Jeanette H. Borja and family
Ana Cruz Paris and family
David T. San Nicolas and family
Ramona SN. and Lnu Kaiser and family
Digna SN. and Sam Enano and family
Joseph T. San Nicolas and family
Lucia SN. and Leon Masga and family
Dolores SN. and Wallace Emul and family

†Ton will also be missed by numerous relatives and friends

Nightly rosaries are being prayed at the San Jose Parish at 7:00pm. †Ton will be with us for the last time on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, beginning at 7:00 am where he will be escorted from Tinian Health Center Morgue to the San Jose Church for responso, rosary and public visitation. Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated at 10:00 am followed by the Rite of Committal at the Tinian Public Cemetery where he will be laid to peaceful rest.

For all your love and prayers, Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Rosita San Nicolas Borja, children and families

ACROSS THE NATION

Firefighters face difficult weather conditions as they battle largest wildfire in Texas history
STINNETT, Texas (AP)—Firefighters in Texas faced rising temperatures, whipped-up winds and dry air Saturday in their battle to keep the largest wildfire in state history from turning more of the Panhandle into a parched wasteland. Firefighters were focused on containing the fire along its northern and eastern perimeter, where aggressive gusts from the southwest threatened to spread the flames and consume more acreage, according to Jason Nedlo, a spokesperson with the team of firefighters battling the Smokehouse Creek Fire that began Monday and has claimed at least two lives. “The main goal is to continue using dozers and fire engines to contain and patrol the fire,” Nedlo said. “We’re also focused on not losing any more structures, no

Health & Wellness

COVID-19 no longer means five days in isolation, CDC says

NEW YORK (AP)—Americans who test positive for COVID-19 no longer need to stay in isolation for five days, U.S. health officials announced Friday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed its longstanding guidance, saying that people can return to work or regular activities if their symptoms are mild and improving and it's been a day since they've had a fever.

The change comes at a time when COVID-19 is no longer the public health menace it once was. It dropped from being the nation's third leading cause of death early in the pandemic to 10th last year.

Most people have some degree of immunity to the coronavirus from vaccinations or from infections. And many people are not following the five-day isolation guidance anyway, some experts say.

"Our goal here is to continue to protect those at risk for severe illness while also reassuring folks that these recommendations are simple, clear, easy to understand, and can be followed," said Dr. Mandy Cohen, the CDC's director.

However, some experts worry that the change may increase the risk of infection for older people and others who are more vulnerable to getting seriously ill.



McKenna Shuster works on a linocut art print which she does as a hobby in her home on the last night of a two-week self-isolation while recovering from symptoms of COVID-19 in Somerville, Mass., on March 26, 2020.

Why are the guidelines changing?

COVID-19 is not causing as many hospitalizations and deaths as it did in the first years of the pandemic. The change is an effort to streamline recommendations so they are similar to longstanding recommendations for flu and other respiratory viruses. Many people with a runny nose, cough or other symptoms aren't testing to distinguish whether it's COVID-19, flu, or something else, officials say.

It may not be as stringent, but the guidance emphasizes that all

people with respiratory symptoms should stay home while they are sick, said Dr. David Margolius, the head of Cleveland's health department.

People are likely still contagious when they test positive, and that hasn't changed, said Jennifer Nuzzo, director of the Pandemic Center at Brown University's School of Public Health.

"What has changed is how much COVID is harming us as a population," Nuzzo said.

Officials noted that some oth-

er countries and California and Oregon have eased isolation guidance in a manner similar to CDC's latest change—and did not see an increase in cases.

What are the new guidelines?

If you have symptoms, stay home until your symptoms are mild and improving and it's been a day since you've had a fever. But then you can remain cautious by wearing a mask and keeping a distance from others.

However, the CDC guid-

ance for workers at nursing homes and other health care facilities is staying the same. That includes a recommendation that medical personnel stay home at least seven days after symptoms first appear, and that they test negative within two days of returning to work.

The agency is emphasizing that everyone should still try to prevent infections in the first place, by getting vaccinated, washing their hands, and taking steps to bring in more outdoor fresh air.

Is there opposition to this change?

Yes, and even some who understand the rationale for the change have concerns.

"My biggest worry in all of this is that employers will take this change in guidance to require employees to come back to work ... before they are ready to, before they feel well enough, and before they are not likely to pose harm to their co-workers," Nuzzo said.

COVID-19 remains especially dangerous to older people and those with other medical conditions. There are still more than 20,000 hospitalizations and more than 2,000 deaths each week due to the coronavirus, according to the CDC. Those 65 and older have the highest hospitaliza-

tion and death rates.

This week, the CDC said seniors should get another dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine.

Will schools change their rules?

Not necessarily. Schools and child care providers have a mixed record on following CDC recommendations and often look to local authorities for the ultimate word. And sometimes other goals, such as reducing absences, can influence a state or district's decisions.

When California eased its guidance, it encouraged kids to come to school when mildly sick. It also said students who test positive for COVID-19 but don't have any symptoms can attend school.

Is this the first change for isolation guidelines?

No. The CDC originally advised 10 days of isolation, but in late 2021 cut it to five days for Americans who catch the coronavirus and have no symptoms or only brief illnesses. Under that guidance for the general public, isolation only ended if a person had been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and if other symptoms were resolving.

Healthy Living

Choose extra-virgin

Among olive oils, extra-virgin contains the most phenols, nutrients that can protect the heart.

Phenol's benefits

- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Prevents excessive blood clotting
- Makes blood vessels more flexible

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Journal of
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American
College of
Cardiology,
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Bacteria-infected mosquitoes making a difference in fight vs. dengue in Rio

NITEROI (AP)—Since Rio de Janeiro declared a public health emergency after an outbreak of dengue fever last month, the city has ramped up testing capacities, opened up a dozen dengue health centers and trained medical staff to attend to the ever-growing needs of its population.

But in Rio's sister city of Niteroi, just across the Guanabara Bay, it's a different story. Home to about half a million people, Niteroi has had just 403 suspected cases of dengue so far this year, and its incidence rate per capita is one of the lowest in the state, with 69 confirmed cases per 100,000 people.

By comparison, the city of Rio has an incidence rate of 700 per 100,000 people, with more than 42,000 cases.

The dengue virus is passed between humans by infected mosquitoes, but a type of bacteria called Wolbachia can interrupt transmission of the disease.

Health officials say a pilot program launched in Niteroi in 2015, in which scientists breed mosquitoes to carry the Wolbachia bacteria, has

helped the city in its battle against dengue.

The Wolbachia strategy was pioneered over the last decade by the nonprofit World Mosquito Program. It was first tested in Australia in 2011 and the group has since run trials in more than a dozen countries, including Brazil. The initiative provides an appealing alternative at a time when the U.N. health agency warns that reported cases of dengue globally increased tenfold over the last generation.

In Niteroi, Mayor Axel Graef said he sought help after the 2012 dengue epidemics, when officials received thousands of notifications and one person died. The city sealed a partnership with the state-run Fiocruz Institute, the World Mosquito Program and the Health Ministry, and cases have been going down ever since.

"It was a moment of great concern in the country and in Rio," Graef recalled in an interview Friday with The Associated Press in Niteroi. "Today, after applying the Wolbachia technique, we have a much better results."

Dengue is a viral infection

transmitted to humans through infected mosquitoes. Many who are infected never develop symptoms, but others get a high fever, headaches, body aches, nausea and a rash. While most get better after a week or so, some develop a severe form that requires hospitalization and can be fatal.

Frequent rains and high temperatures, which accelerate the hatching of mosquito eggs and the development of larvae, make the famously hot city of Rio especially susceptible. Every couple of years, outbreaks become epidemics.

In spite of the low number of cases, the city of Niteroi, like its neighbors, is still investing heavily in prevention. Every day, hundreds of city health workers are sent to survey neighborhoods, streets, rooftops, forested areas, small businesses and junkyards to promote best practices, mostly watching out for any standing water where mosquitoes could lay their eggs.

On Friday, under scorching heat, Augusto Cesar, 63, climbed up the Morro da Penha, or Penha Hill, a low-income neighborhood, known in

Brazil as a favela. For more than two decades, the city agent has been entering local residents' homes, climbing roofs, picking up trash and inspecting every corner of the Penha neighborhood, looking for standing water. Even the cap of a plastic bottle, if filled with rain water, can become breeding ground for larvae, he said.

"The greatest challenge is access," Cesar said, pearls of sweat trickling down his face. Favelas, often built informally, can be hard to navigate, like mazes. After spotting a large plastic water tank on a roof that he would like to inspect, Cesar makes his way through a tiny alley, squeezed between two walls of concrete and red bricks, but fails to find a path to the rooftop.

Further down the road, he spots two more unsealed water tanks. He climbs a wall and starts removing the loose sheets of metal covering them. He installs mosquito nets and replaces the metal sheets. In a shady alley, he lifts the tops of two water tanks, gets a flashlight and scrutinizes the surface for any sign of mosquito larvae.

Life & Style

Asia’s richest man celebrates son’s prenuptials with a star-studded bash

NEW DELHI (AP)—What happens when the son of Asia’s richest man is about to get married?

His father throws a three-day prenuptial bash four months before the actual ceremony.

Tycoons from around the world, heads of state, as well as Hollywood and Bollywood stars descended on the small western Indian city of Jamnagar on Friday where billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani is kickstarting a big fat wedding celebration for his youngest son.

The nearly 1,200-person guest list includes pop superstar Rihanna, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Sunder Picha, Ivanka Trump and Bollywood celebrity Shah Rukh Khan.

All eyes are on Anant Ambani, 28, and his long-time girlfriend Radhika Merchant, 29, who will tie the knot in July. Radhika is the daughter of Viren Merchant, CEO of Encore Healthcare Pvt. Ltd., and entre-



This photograph released by the Reliance group shows Mark Zuckerberg, left, and his wife Priscilla Chan at a pre-wedding bash of billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani's son Anant Ambani in Jamnagar, India, Friday, Mar. 01, 2024.

preneur Shaila Merchant.

Such festivities keep up with the Ambani family’s tradition of lavish and over-the-top parties while displaying the Indian billionaire’s economic and political clout.

Here is everything you need to know about the family and the prenuptial bash that captivated the country.

Who is Mukesh Ambani?

Mukesh Ambani, 66, is currently the world’s 10th richest man with a net worth of \$115bn, according to Forbes. He is also the richest person in Asia.

His Reliance Industries is a massive conglomerate, reporting over \$100 billion in annual revenue, with interests ranging from petrochemicals, and oil and gas to telecoms and retail.

Under Ambani’s leadership, Reliance—founded by his father in 1966—sparked a telecom price war with the launch of the 4G phone and broadband service Jio in 2016. Today, it has more than 420 million subscribers and offers 5G services. Earlier this week, Disney struck an \$8.5bn deal to merge its India business with Ambani’s Reliance Industries, forming a new media giant.

The Ambani family owns, among other assets, a 27-story private apartment building, named Antila, worth \$1 billion in Mumbai. It has three helipads, a 160-car garage, a private movie theater, a swimming pool, and a fitness center.

Ambani’s critics say his company has flourished mainly because of political connections during the Congress governments in the 1970s and 80s and subsequently under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s rule after 2014. They say “crony capitalism” in India has helped certain corporations, such as Ambani’s, thrive.

Mukesh Ambani, 66, has started passing the torch to his two sons and daughter. The oldest son, Akash Ambani, is now chairperson of Reliance Jio; his daughter, Isha, oversees retail; and the youngest, Anant—who will wed in July—has been inducted into the new energy business.

Do you want a party like no other? The ambanis have your back

Extravagant parties are the Ambanis’ specialty.

In 2018, when his daughter married, Ambani made the headlines because of the grand celebrations, with pop sensation Beyoncé performing at the pre-wedding festivities. At the time, Former U.S. Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry were among those who rubbed shoulders with Indian celebrities and Bollywood stars in the western Indian city of Udaipur.

Later that year, the happy couple, Isha Ambani and Anand Piramal, officially celebrated their engagement overlooking the picturesque Lake Como in Italy. In December 2018, they got married at the Ambani residence in Mumbai.

Silly French newspaper only publishes on Feb. 29

PARIS (AP)—Read all about it, right now—or you’ll have to wait another four years. Satirical French newspaper La Bougie du Sapeur only comes out on Feb. 29.

It’s a leap year-only publication, filled with cringe-worthy puns and commentary on events of the past four years.

The 2024 edition includes an article suggesting France doesn’t need schools anymore thanks to artificial intelligence. Another floats the idea of dismantling the Eiffel Tower during the Paris Olympics to reduce security risks—and having IKEA produce a manual for



The satirical French newspaper 'La Bougie du Sapeur' is photographed at a newspaper shop in Paris, Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024.

rebuilding it.

Some friends started the newspaper as a joke in 1980, naming it after a comic book figure who was born on Feb. 29. The last edition—in 2020, as the world went into COVID-19 lockdowns—sold 120,000 copies. Revenue from newsstand sales goes mainly to a charity for people with developmental disorders including autism.

Its editors are proudly politically incorrect, and some articles seem rather, well, dated. But that’s the point. That, and lifting the mood a bit.

When the world goes out of whack, reads its once-in-four-years editorial, “Sometimes you have to laugh about it.”

Fellow customer expects help at checkout line

DEAR ABBY: A while ago, as I was standing in line at the grocery store, a young woman with seven or eight items tied up the checkout process by leaving her groceries on the belt, and then running back to grab something she forgot. It happens. I get it.

She was buying name-brand food items, among them an \$8 jar of spaghetti sauce. She used the last of her food stamp card, paid some cash and was still short of money to pay for her purchase. Since I was next in line, she looked at me and waited. The cashier and bagger (who appeared to know her) stared at me as well, waiting for me to cover the difference.

I often help people when I can, but this was a rare time I couldn’t because my only income at the time was \$150 in food assistance. I suppose I could have helped by showing her the 99-cent sauce that was on sale, and the store brand of mac ‘n’ cheese, etc., but I didn’t.

The hostility from the customer and the food store workers was becoming more overt as the minutes ticked by. The bagger finally pulled her credit card from her wallet and paid the balance for her. I have since felt torn by this situation and wonder whether I was right or not by refusing to pick up the rest of her tab.

UNSURE IN ARIZONA

DEAR UNSURE: Somehow I doubt this sin of omission is going to consign you to hell. Your guilty conscience is

punishment enough. To pay someone’s food bill is a kind gesture, but it is NOT an obligation. You couldn’t afford it at the time. Let it go.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my husband for 30 years. We have a 26-year-old son, “Isaac.” My son is difficult, but my husband never listened to me when he was young—when we were supposed to be shaping him. Now my husband doesn’t like the person Isaac has become. He blames Isaac for every problem in our marriage, which is a bigger problem than Isaac is.

My husband is a good provider but a terrible listener and communicator. If I even remotely suggest he does or did anything wrong in our marriage or with our son, he gets defensive, starts a fight and then blames me. I’m the loneliest married person alive. I always feel like I am caught in the middle. Please give me some advice.

AT AN IMPASSE IN MICHIGAN

DEAR AT AN IMPASSE: At 26, your son is an adult. At this point, you can’t change the person he has become. Because your husband now dislikes him (you said Isaac is “difficult”), quit defending him. The marriage you have described is not a healthy one. Your husband is more than a terrible listener and communicator; from your description he is also a bully.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

I might have suggested marriage counseling, but I’m 99% certain he will refuse if you raise the subject. You have a right to be happy. I seriously doubt you will be if you continue living with this man. Consult a marriage and family law attorney and ask what your rights would be in the state of Michigan were you to separate or divorce so you can make an informed decision about your future.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

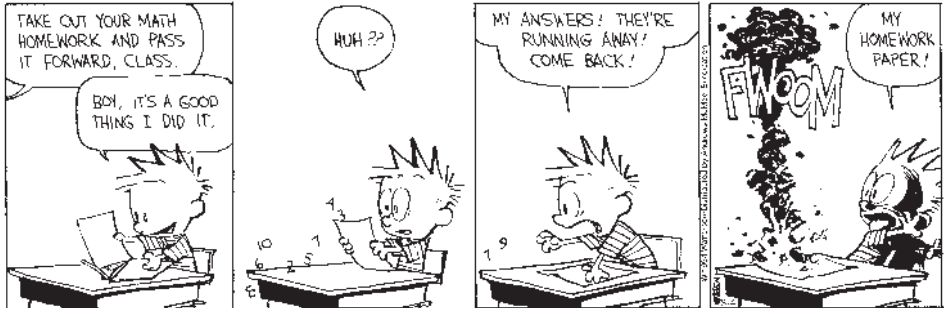
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

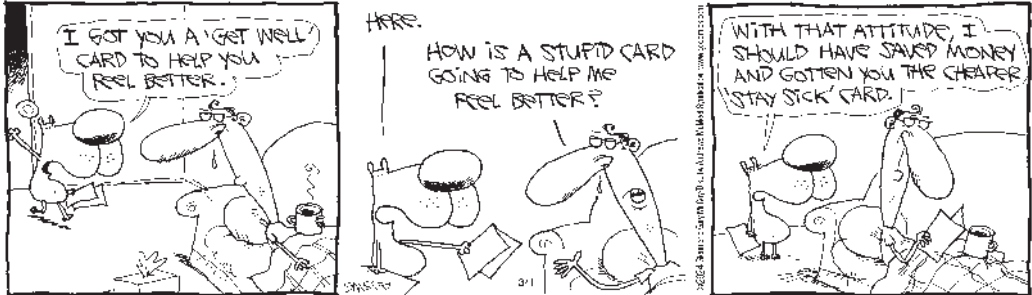


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Indian lentil stew

4 Shame

9 "Blue Bloods" ailer

12 Exploit

13 "Time in a Bottle" singer

14 Odometer start

15 Black, brown or blond, e.g.

17 Numerical prefix

18 Bamboozle

19 Temporary car

21 Coniferous trees

24 "Buenos —"

25 In the style of

26 Pooch

28 Salad green

31 Brooches

33 Refusals

35 Entreaty

36 Take hold

38 "That'll be — day!"

40 Magic, on scoreboards

41 Yankee nickname

43 Noah's landfill

45 Prefix with "logical"

47 Hosp. scan

48 Like Abner

49 Naturally lit room

54 ET's craft

55 Incite (Fr.)

56 Water (Fr.)

57 Old space station

58 New stem

59 Work unit

DOWN

1 "Gee, ya think?"

2 Simile part

3 Floral garland

4 Honda model

5 Charles of "Death Wish"

6 Pioneer-ing ISP

7 Berate

8 Brave

9 Camp employee

10 Dog biscuit

11 Evening in France

16 — Victor

20 50-and-over org.

21 Beanies

22 Writer Wiesel

23 "Forrest Gump" lieutenant

27 Obtained

29 Crime lab fluids

30 Bagel variety

32 Round Table

34 Hair titles

37 Loud sounds

39 Straying

42 Moola

44 Football filler

45 Jack Horner's prize

46 LP player

50 Gp. such as Amnesty International

51 Director Ang

52 Rowing need

53 Cheap hairpiece

Solution time: 21 mins.

Last Friday's Answer

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Chaz Bono, 55; Patricia Heaton, 66; Mykelti Williamson, 67; Catherine O'Hara, 70.

Happy Birthday: Your emotions run high this year; put more thought into each move you make. Positive acts will help you push forward without trepidation and lift your spirits while you gain praise and respect. Refuse to give in to anger. Common sense and doing what's right will be your ticket to success. Simplicity and moderation will impact your life and make a difference to those you encounter. Your numbers are 6, 14, 22, 26, 31, 39, 48.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Learn from your mistakes. Don't trust hearsay or give in to pressure tactics. Surround yourself with those who have something to offer in return, and share your concerns regarding quality and cost. Disclose your feelings, and embrace a meaningful relationship with honesty and intentions. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't rely on others to do things for you. Read contracts thoroughly and oversee matters that entail sharing money, information or skills. There is no room for error; when in doubt, take a pass. Avoid places that have a risk factor that can impact you physically. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't rely on others to do things for you. Put your skills, experience and physical strength to use in order to complete your mission. Refuse to let what others do or say stir up emotions or cost you time and money. Use your energy wisely. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't mix business with pleasure. Emotions will rally quickly in sensitive situations, putting you in the hot seat if you can't back your in-

sinuations. Make a point to think, and verify facts before you speak. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You can have fun without overspending. Say no to shared expenses and joint ventures. Someone will take advantage of your generosity if you aren't careful. Put your energy into personal gains, self-improvement and better health. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You'll encounter plenty of input from on-lookers. Don't let anyone interfere; do what works for you, and don't apologize for looking out for your interests. Emotional issues will surface if you aren't upfront with someone you love. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Push forward and finish on time. Refuse to let an emotional issue drag you down or cause you to miss an opportunity. Pay attention to your physical well-being, and maintain strength and the ability to initiate what you want in real time. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Consider a lifestyle change. Taking better care of your health will help you build strength, courage and the desire to put your ideas and plans to good use. Spend more time developing and exploring possibilities. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Concentrate on what you are doing, spending and trying to improve. You'll encounter plenty of distractions that require additional discipline if you plan to reach your objective. Refuse to let opposition or interference drag you down. ★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Look for hidden costs and fine print in contracts, and recognize those eager to separate you from your cash. Call the shots and monitor the changes you implement. Balance and integrity will help you avoid temptation. ★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Learn to rely on experts. You'll fall short of your goal if you take on too much. Forward-thinking and overseeing your idea may take longer, but both will pay off in time. Don't let your emotions drive you to distraction. Observe and verify. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Participate, make your mark and follow through until you satisfy your soul. Concentrate on what's important, monitor expenses and run a tight operation. Success depends on authenticity, simplicity and equability. Know your audience. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are aggressive, persistent and imaginative. You are intense and proactive.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

			2		9	6			8
7	1	8				2	9		
5		9		1	3			4	
	2			8				3	9
6	9				1	4			
		4							
		6	2		5		4		
3	4			6	9	8		2	
2		1	3			6			5

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

1	7	2	5	8	4	3	9	6
6	9	8	3	1	2	7	4	5
5	4	3	9	6	7	1	2	8
3	8	5	2	7	1	9	6	4
7	2	1	6	4	9	5	8	3
4	6	9	8	3	5	2	1	7
9	5	7	4	2	6	8	3	1
2	3	6	1	5	8	4	7	9
8	1	4	7	9	3	6	5	2

Difficulty: ★ 3/4
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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BLACKPINK (BAND)

Solution: 8 letters

H C S C I R Y L O D A N C E S
N A H B I L L B O A R D O T T
L A Y R L E F A S H I O N H S
A B E A O L L R I G B M C E I
D O E R B M E T J E H U E A L
Y R S U O M A F S T F S R L Y
G N I S I K O T U I O I T B A
A P G N O S S O I R H C L U B
G I A B E E S P B C O W O M P
A N V O L E N O E R A U Q S O
S K U L I I L P N E T S I L P
I L I N E D N K U F A N S S U
L N N E W S I K I O E D I V L
G E C O I D U T S A R E N A A
J A N E L E S S A V A G E K R

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Anime, Arena, Bestselling, Billboard, Blink, Bold, Boombayah, Born Pink, Chromatica, Concert, Dances, Famous, Fans, Fashion, Film, Girl, Group, Jennie, Jisoo, Korean, K-Pop, Lady Gaga, Lisa, Listen, Lyrics, Music, News, Outfits, Playlists, Popular, Really, Rose, Savage, Selena, Seoul, Sing, Song, South, Square One, Studio, The Album, Video, Whistle
Last Friday's Answer: Computers
To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-5480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

LeBron reaches 40K points, but Jokic, Nuggets beat Lakers, 124-114



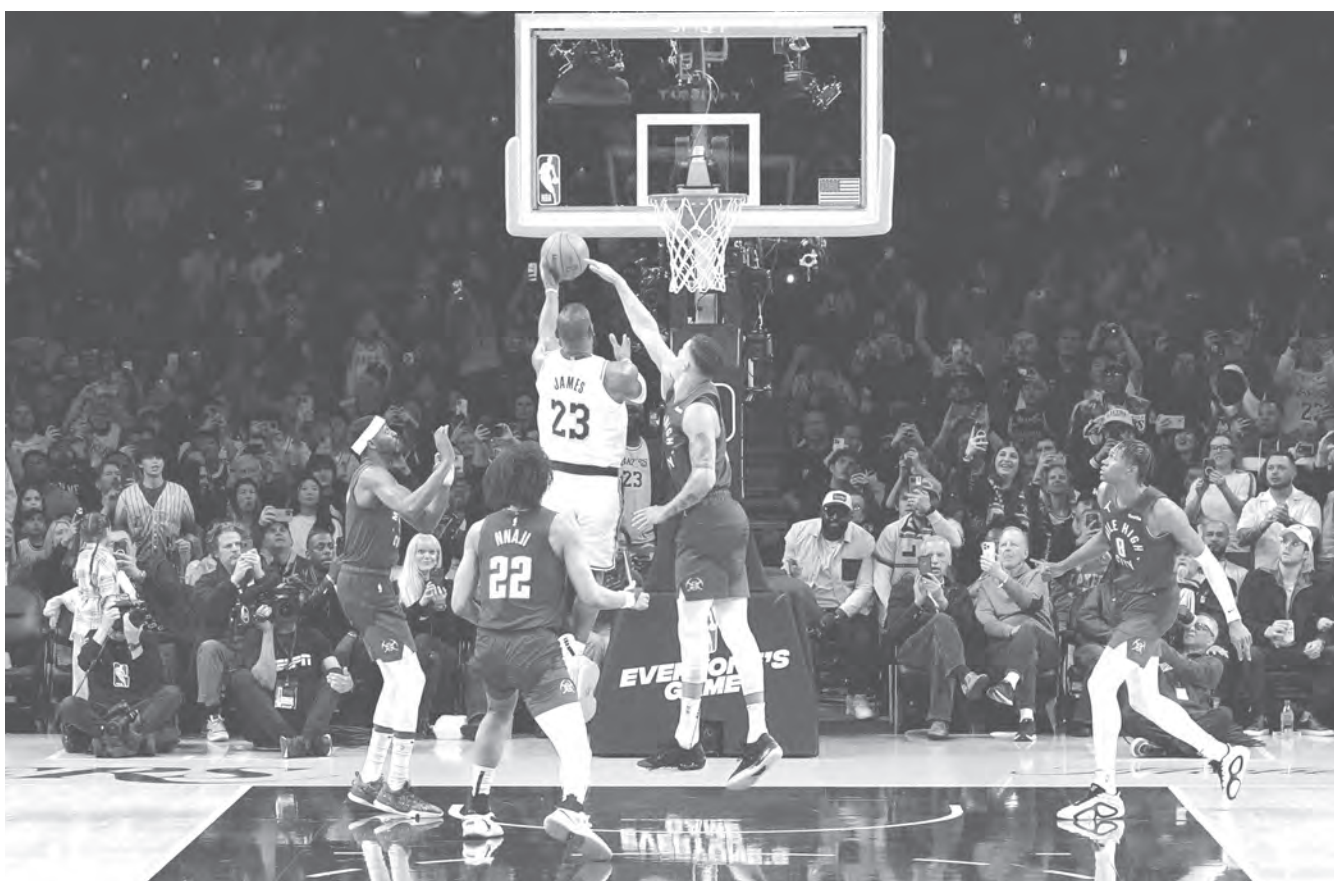
LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James reached 40,000 points, but Nikola Jokic had 35 points and 10 rebounds as the Denver Nuggets made a late push to beat the Los Angeles Lakers 124-114 on Saturday night.

Aaron Gordon hit a 3-point-er with 3:49 remaining to put Denver back in front, and the Nuggets closed on a 16-6 run for their sixth straight win. Michael Porter Jr. made all five of his 3s to finish with 25 points, Jamal Murray had 24 points and 11 assists, and Gordon ended up with 18 points.

James had 26 points and nine assists while checking off his latest milestone, but the Lakers couldn't get their third straight win. Rui Hachimura had 23 points, and Anthony Davis added 17 points and 11 rebounds as all five Los Angeles starters had at least 17 points.

James spun around Porter and drove the lane to hit a layup with 10:39 left in the second quarter to become the first NBA player with 40,000 points while extending his lead as the league's career scoring leader.

James received a standing ovation at the next timeout, while coach Darvin Ham gave him a congratulatory



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) scores as Denver Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr. (1), defends, becoming the first NBA player to reach 40,000 points in a career, during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Los Angeles.

pat on the chest as he came to the sideline. There was an in-arena video presentation, which was preceded and followed by James raising the ball over his head to the delight of fans, many of whom were wearing his Lakers, Cleveland Cavaliers, Miami Heat or St. Vincent-St. Mary

High School jersey.

James had 11 points in the history-making first half, helping the Lakers take a 66-58 lead at the break. Davis, Hachimura and D'Angelo Russell each had 13 points, with Los Angeles shooting 57.4% from the field (27 for 47).

Jokic was his typical prolific self, pacing the Nuggets with 16 points, five rebounds and four assists in the half. Porter made all three of his 3-point attempts, but the rest of Denver shot 2 for 11 (18.2%) from deep.

Jokic ran off 13 straight points for the Nuggets in the third quarter to put them

up by as many as four before the Lakers tied it at 89 going into the fourth.

HEAT 126, JAZZ 120

MIAMI (AP)—Jimmy Butler scored 18 of his season-high 37 points in the third quarter, Bam Adebayo finished with 23 and Miami held off Utah for its 10th victory in 13 games.

Caleb Martin had 18 points and Terry Rozier added 14 for Miami. Duncan Robinson and

Jaime Jaquez Jr. each had 12.

Keyonte George scored 31 points and Lauri Markkanen had 25 for Utah. Collin Sexton and John Collins each scored 18 points.

NETS 114, HAWKS 102

NEW YORK (AP)—Mikal Bridges scored 38 points and Brooklyn rolled past Atlanta for the second straight game.

Cam Johnson chipped in 23 points for the Nets, who improved to 3-3 under interim coach Kevin Ollie and pulled within two games of the Hawks for 10th place in the Eastern Conference and the final spot in the play-in tournament. They also beat Atlanta 124-97 on Thursday night.

Dejounte Murray had 20 points, 11 assists and six rebounds for the Hawks.

TRAIL BLAZERS 107, GRIZZLIES 100

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Anfernee Simons scored 20 of his 30 points in the second half and overtime and Portland beat Memphis after overcoming a 13-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

Toumani Camara added 15 points to help Portland sweep the two-game set after taking the opener 122-92 on Friday night. Ashton Hagans finished with 13 points, and Dalano Banton scored eight his 10 points in overtime.

Santi Aldama and Vince Williams Jr. each had 21 points for Memphis.

After heart transplant, Pollard plans to campaign for organ donations

Scot Pollard had grown so accustomed to his weak and failing heart that he didn't realize how close he was to dying.

"Oh, boy. That thing was a wreck," the former NBA player and "Survivor" contestant told The Associated Press on Friday, a day after he was released from the hospital and two weeks after he received a heart transplant.

"The doctors immediately knew I was much closer to death once they pulled my heart out," Pollard said. "I don't think I would have made it another couple of weeks."

An 11-year NBA veteran who was a member of the 2008 champion Boston Celtics, Pollard inherited a condition from his father, who died at 54, when Scot was 16. Scot Pollard's heart deteriorated quickly after he contracted a virus in 2021; attempts to fix the problem with medication or less radical procedures were unsuccessful, leaving a transplant as the only option.

But finding a heart big enough to pump blood throughout the body of the 6-foot-11, 260-pound former NBA center was a challenge. Pollard was advised to list himself at as many transplant centers as possible (though they needed to be nearby, so he could be available within four hours if a donor

heart became available.)

Pollard, 49, underwent pre-transplant testing near his home in Carmel, Indiana, and Chicago, but when he arrived at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center last month he was admitted to intensive care and bumped up to the second-highest priority for organ transplants, because of his condition.

Nine days later, his wife, Dawn, posted on X: "It's go time!"

"The fact that it came so quick probably saved my life. I don't know how much longer I would have lasted," Scot Pollard said. "I was just declining so fast."

Privacy rules don't allow Pollard to know the identity of his donor, though doctors told him it was "a big man." What is allowed: A recipient can write a letter that will be delivered to the donor's family if they want. (They can also write the recipient, though Pollard had not received such a letter yet.)

Speaking from temporary housing in Nashville, Tennessee, where he needs to stay for the next six to eight weeks so he can have the proper follow-up care, Pollard said he has written a draft of his letter. In it, he thanks the donor—whom he calls a hero—and offers to connect.

"I would like to show them how their big man's heart is living on and helping people," he said. "I would love to show them this heart isn't going to waste."

Pollard has been warned that many donors' families don't want contact with the recipient, because it makes them relive their loved ones' death. Heart donors, in particular, are often accident victims who were otherwise healthy.

"If it's a healthy heart, that's because something else killed them," Pollard said. "I hope they reach out, because I would like to include them in the rest of my life."

That life has already improved.

Even after he retired from the NBA, Pollard liked to keep busy—with broadcasting, a few acting roles and as a reality show contestant. But over the last few months, he needed to stop to rest even just walking around the house.

It was only when he woke up after the five-hour surgery that he realized how bad things had gotten.

"I was laying around all the time. That just became my new normal," he said. "As an athlete, you just sort of put things out of your mind. You push through it. But I couldn't

push that heart. I can already tell I can push this heart."

After the transplant, which was performed by Dr. Ashish Shah, Pollard was walking around the hospital ward within a day. He is now up to "easy squats," and working on his balance.

"I'm a mover. I don't sit around well," Pollard said.

On Thursday, Pollard danced and shadow-boxed his way down the hospital corridor in a tank top that said "BUT DID YOU DIE?" His care-givers applauded as he yelled "I'm getting out!" and mugged for a camera as he rang the discharge bell.

Pollard said he is going to campaign for organ donation.

"I'm going to annoy people with becoming a donor. That's going to be a project for the rest of my life," he said.

He's already helped convince one person to sign up.

"I had never considered being an organ donor, because I wasn't really educated about it and there were some fears when I thought about the process," Dawn Pollard said. "It became our reality that Scot needed a heart, so I immediately got registered. I am proud to be an organ donor now. It makes me feel good knowing I could be helping someone live."

NBA BRIEFS

Raptors star Scottie Barnes out indefinitely with broken middle finger on left hand

TORONTO (AP)—Raptors star Scottie Barnes will be sidelined indefinitely after he broke the middle finger on his left hand during the first half of Friday night's loss to Golden State. Barnes won the NBA Rookie of the Year award in 2022. A first-time All-Star this season, the 6-foot-7 forward came into Friday's game averaging career highs of 20 points, 8.3 rebounds and 6.1 assists.

Barnes was subbed out with just under two minutes to play in the second quarter and went to the locker room for treatment. Kelly Olynyk started the third period in Barnes' place. "Obviously when you lose an All-Star player in the game, that definitely changes a lot of things," Toronto coach Darko Rajakovic said. "We tried with different lineups, different players tonight, gave multiple players opportunities there." Barnes finished with 10 points and six rebounds in 16 minutes, ending a career-best streak of five consecutive double-doubles. The Raptors (22-38), who have lost two straight, continue a four-game homestand when they

host Charlotte on Sunday night.

Lakers sign Harry Giles III to two-way contract looking for more depth at center

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Los Angeles Lakers signed center Harry Giles III to a two-way contract on Saturday. Giles, 25, averaged 3.4 points and 1.6 rebounds in 16 games for the Brooklyn Nets this season before he was waived on Feb. 8. The 20th pick in the 2017 draft, Giles has also played for the Sacramento Kings and Portland Trail Blazers in a four-year NBA career. He was a touted high school recruit who played one season at Duke in 2016-17. Lakers coach Darvin Ham said Giles was signed to create more depth in the frontcourt with reserves Christian Wood (knee) and Colin Castleton (fractured wrist) out. "He was available, saw the opportunity to have gained a little bit of insurance at that position with a couple of guys out ailing," Ham said before the Lakers' home game against the Denver Nuggets. "I feel like he still has a ton of upside. Just need to get with the right program, and we have the coaches to try to help him get better."

Ohtani stuns many around the world with marriage announcement



**G L E N -
D A L E ,**
Ariz. (AP)—

Shohei Ohtani stunned the Los Angeles Dodgers—and many around the world—with his marriage announcement on Thursday, so manager Dave Roberts said any gift the team gives the two-time MVP would be like most of the money in his contract: deferred.

“I’m very happy for him and his bride,” Roberts said, smiling. “As far as wedding gifts, we got surprised and didn’t have much time to think about it. I’m sure it’s en route.”

Ohtani, the two-way Japanese star, revealed on Instagram early Thursday that he was married. Much of the relationship remains shrouded in mystery.

“She is a Japanese woman,” Ohtani said through an interpreter. “I don’t really feel comfortable talking about when I got married exactly, but she’s



Los Angeles Dodgers’ Shohei Ohtani addresses the media about his surprise marriage announcement, Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, during spring training baseball workouts at Camelback Ranch in Phoenix.

a normal Japanese woman.” Ohtani only gave a few more tidbits about the relation-

ship during a short interview on Thursday, saying he had known his new bride for three

or four years.

The 29-year-old Ohtani is Japan’s biggest celebrity.

There has been curiosity about his personal life, which he has always kept private. His focus and his image has always been 100%-baseball focused and free of scandals and tabloid news.

“I felt like it was good timing because it was before the season,” Ohtani said. “I didn’t really want any distractions once the season started. I would have liked to announce it earlier, but there were some paperwork issues that (delayed) the whole process.”

Ohtani moved from the Los Angeles Angels to the Dodgers in December on a record \$700 million, 10-year contract that calls for \$680 million to be paid from 2034-43.

Ohtani said his marriage didn’t affect how he treated free agency.

“She has a great under-

standing of my profession, and she’s willing to be wherever I wanted to play and ultimately it was my decision,” Ohtani said.

The post on Instagram included a photo of his dog “Dekopin,” whom Ohtani also calls “Decoy.”

He wrote: “We hope the two of us—and one animal—will work together.”

The news broke in the middle of the night in North America and late afternoon in Japan where it was immediately the top news item.

Japanese television reports daily on his training in the United States and, because of his unprecedented success in North America, he has become the pride of Japan. The Dodgers have become Japan’s de facto team.

Ohtani is training with the Dodgers as they prepare to open in Seoul, South Korea, on March 20-21 in a two-game series against the San Diego Padres.

Ohtani underwent surgery on his right elbow last September and will not pitch this season. He will be used as a designated hitter and there is a possibility he could play in the field.

In his spring training debut this week, he hit a two-run home run against the Chicago White Sox.

Ohtani has hit 171 home runs, including 44 last season, and has a .274 career batting average along with a 38-19 pitching record in five seasons. He missed the 2019 season due to elbow surgery and has a 3.01 career ERA.

He was the 2018 AL Rookie of the Year and the 2021 and ‘23 AL MVP in 2021, often compared to Babe Ruth for his skill as a two-way player.

Fanatics founder says company unfairly blamed for new MLB uniforms

BOSTON (AP)—Fanatics founder Michael Rubin says his company is being unfairly blamed for new Major League Baseball uniforms that have see-through pants and other fit and design problems.

“This is a little bit of a difficult position,” he said on Friday at the MIT Sloan Sports Analytics Conference. “We’re purely doing exactly as we’ve been told, and we’ve been told we’re doing everything exactly right. And we’re getting the s--- kicked out of us. So that’s not fun.”

Since reporting to spring training this month, some players have complained about the fit of new uni-

forms. The white pants worn by some teams are also see-through enough to clearly show tucked-in jersey tops.

“I know everyone hates them,” Phillies shortstop Trea Turner said. “We all liked what we had. We understand business, but I think everyone wanted to keep it the same way, for the most part, with some tweaks here or there.”

Rubin said uniforms were made to the specifications set by MLB and Nike. Fanatics has been making the baseball uniform since 2017, he said; Fanatics bought the company that has been making the uniforms since 2005, so there has been no real change in the manufacturer in almost

two decades.

Rubin said Nike made changes “for all the right reasons” after getting feedback from players who wanted material more breathable and stretchable.

“Nike designs everything. Hands us a spec and says, ‘Make this,’” he said. “We have made everything exactly to the spec. And Nike and baseball would say, ‘Yes, you’ve done everything we’ve asked you do to.’”

Rubin said part of the problem is players needing to get used to the changes, saying a similar issue dissipated after NFL and NBA uniforms changed. But in the future he said he would try to involve

more people in the decisions.

“They got certain players on board, not all players on board. When you change something so old and so nostalgic you need everybody to be on board with it,” Rubin said. “I believe Nike will be proved right.”

MLB did not respond to a request for comment.

Players’ association head Tony Clark said Thursday his members had voiced their objections.

“The commentary that’s being offered suggests that the powers that be are paying attention to the concerns that are there and are engaging how best to address them moving forward,” Clark said.

Phillies scrapping \$1 hot dog nights following unruly fan behavior

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—For more than a quarter-century, Phillies fans considered dollar hot dog night among the best ballpark promotions—but the team has now decided it was the worst.

Those dog days of April—when Philly weather is cold and the wieners are a steal—are going, going, gone.

The Phillies officially ended the popular promotion Thursday and replaced dollar dogs on select dates with a 2-for-1 deal at two April games at Citizens Bank Park.

A statement from the team said the change was made “based on the organization’s ongoing commitment to provide a positive experience for all fans in attendance.”

What wasn’t positive about dollar dog nights?

Armed with projectile frankfurters, some unruly Phillies fans began chucking their favor-

ite Hatfield meat during a game last year, and the dogs soared like cans of corn throughout the stands and onto the field. The demand for the discount dogs also led to clogged lanes—if not arteries—on the concourse, and the cramped spaces led to security and safety concerns.

Who needs snowballs?

An April 11 game last season turned into a Philly food fight when fans—largely good-naturedly—tossed their ballpark franks in several sections, leading to multiple ejections.

“It wasn’t just the throwing,” said John Weber, senior vice president, Phillies ticket operations and projects. “It’s the concourse, the crowds of everybody being at the same X amount of stands. But obviously, you know, the throwing was a little bit of a tipping point.”

To be frank, the Phillies don’t necessarily need to slash prices these days to pack in crowds.

The Phillies started the promotion 27 years ago when they still played at cavernous Veterans Stadium to try and boost ticket sales on an otherwise dreary game night.

But the Phillies doggedly stuck with the food-frenzy deal through the decades, even as they rose again to become one of the best teams in the National League. The Phillies topped 3 million fans last season—and scheduled three dollar dog nights for two April and one May weeknight game when attendance is generally down compared to weekend games.

“The idea originally was much more family-orientated, four, five, six people and having a discounted concession item,” Weber said. “As it’s morphed over time, it’s gone more to a younger demographic, which is great as well, especially in the April, May timeframe.”

The Phillies BOGO nights

this season are April 2 against the Reds and April 16 against the Rockies.

Aramark did not provide sales totals for 2023.

The company said ahead of the 2022 World Series when the Phillies played the Houston Astros that 1 of every 3 fans eats a hot dog at Citizens Bank Park and an average 6,951 hot dogs were sold per game—enough to line Ashburn Alley five times.

The Phillies kept a running dollar dog sold tally on the scoreboard for each game they were marked down.

The Phillies first caught blowback in 2022 when they tried to scale back from three dollar dog nights to two.

The unpopular move failed to cut the mustard with fans—even in the highest branches of state government. Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey responded to a writer for the

Crossing Broad website who complained about the decision with a post on social media that read, “I agree, more Dollar Dog Nights. @Phillies Let’s do this.”

Casey was a hot dog hero when one more dog night was added to the schedule.

He took a high road on Thursday, posting on social media, “Double (hot dog emoji) sounds like a great way to fuel up for #RedOctober.”

Phillies fans still grilled the decision on social media.

By mid-afternoon, one apparel shop already had a T-shirt made lamenting the decision with the inscription “RIP dollar dog night. Pork Flew. Heads Rolled.”

“Our goal is to always give a great fan experience,” Weber said. “If you were there at the game, it was not a great experience.”

If cheap meats are still your thing at the old ballgame, head across the state to Pittsburgh,

where the Pirates will hold at least six \$1 hot dog nights. Just a long relay throw south down I-95, the Class-A Wilmington Blue Rocks offer \$2 dog Wednesdays.

The Texas Rangers sell dollar dogs at every Wednesday home game and the Minnesota Twins put extra buns in the oven for their \$1 dogs on each Tuesday home game. The Kansas City Royals are among the teams that still offer low-cost hot dogs.

Just not in Philly anymore, where some bad apples spoiled the Phillies’ appetite for a good-dog deal.

“Hopefully our fans will still come out and view two hot dogs for five dollars as a value and support the team in those two April dates that we have,” Weber said.

Hey, there is still a chance in Philly to always snag a free hot dog—just catch one out of the Phanatic’s famed hot dog launcher.

QBs Williams, Maye, Daniels could go 1-2-3 in NFL draft

By MICHAEL MAROT
AP SPORTS WRITER



INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Caleb Williams and Jayden Daniels arrived in Indianapolis as Heisman Trophy winners. Drake Maye is seeking to add to his family's impressive athletic legacy.

And the only player who might prevent those three talented quarterbacks from going 1-2-3 in this year's NFL draft appears to be All-America receiver Marvin Harrison Jr.

On Friday, the four top prospects attended the league's scouting combine, and for the next eight weeks, they will be vying for the No. 1 spot.

"I think I've put in all the hard work, the time, the effort, the energy into being that. I don't think of a Plan B," Williams said. "That's kind of how I do things in my life. I don't think of



Southern California quarterback Caleb Williams speaks during a press conference at the NFL football scouting combine in Indianapolis, Friday, March 1, 2024.

could result in a delay.

"You want to have a thorough evaluation on all the players because you go back to those and you look at those evaluations as those guys grow in the league and go through free agency," Chicago coach Matt Eberflus said Tuesday. "You look at all those evaluations, so you do it the same way (every year)."

Washington and New England both have young quarterbacks who struggled last season. If those teams decide to start over, they could be choosing between Williams, Maye or Daniels.

Before Daniels' emergence last season, Maye had been regarded by many as the No. 2 quarterback in the draft class.

His father, Mark, played in the World League of American Football. Two of his brothers won national championships in 2017—Luke with North Carolina's basketball team and Cole with Florida's baseball team. Drake's other brother, Beau, walked on to the Tar Heels basketball team. His mother, Aimee, was a high school basketball standout.

"My brother Luke, the shot he hit against Kentucky, it put us on notice back in Memphis that year," Maye said when asked about his family's favorite moment. "Being the youngest of four boys, three older brothers and three of my best friends, I've got a lot of memories."

Drake Maye could become his family's first NFL draft pick.

Then there's Daniels, who turned down the chance to enter last year's draft after a strong finish at LSU. Instead, he altered his offseason training program and came back with 15 pounds of added muscle, along with what receiver Malik Nabers described as a stronger, more precise arm.

Daniels turned in a dazzling 2023 season, became the third LSU player to win the Heisman and has been climbing on draft boards ever since. Can he do enough before draft day to separate himself from Williams, Maye and Harrison and go No. 1?

"The best situation is whoever believes in me," Daniels said. "Obviously, if someone's going to take a chance on me, say, you know, 'This kid could change our organization or franchise, can be the face of the franchise,' that's somebody who supports me, believes in me. Obviously if they call my name, they believe in me as a quarterback."

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just executed when the time was right, and things worked out," he said.

On how they felt winning the title, Kintol said it felt good. "We knew the Dodgers were coming, so we just had to do our part—execute the plays and good things will happen."

Kintol then thanked the SBL and its board members, officials, umpires, teams that participated, and to the fans that came out to watch and support.



LEIGH GASES

The 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League champions Pirates poses for a group photo during the awards ceremony after Game 3 of their finals series against the Dodgers last Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

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her team to victory.

Sweat and tears were shed when, after the junior scored her fourth goal and the team's fifth of the game in the 38th minute, she injured herself again after she landed on an MHS defender's foot and injured her right ankle. She fell as she cried in pain and was taken out of the game.

Even with that, the five goals that they've notched—one which was made by Audrey Castro four minutes in—were more than enough to seal the deal.

MHS could only score one more goal in the 43rd minute which was by Tamia Kileleman-Hix. They made many attempts at the net, but failed to deliver as time ran out. Their only other goal was made by Rizza Relucio early in the first half.

Along with Chavez and senior Audrey Castro, are seniors Aubrey Castro and Serin Chung, as well as Irin Chung, Euky Claveria, Julie Chavez, Keylie Claveria, Irene Park, Phoenix Gross, Misha Kim, Stacy Arriola, Hoo Wang, and Mimi Culp.

Third place went to Saipan Southern High School after they defeated Kagman High School, 3-1, earlier in the afternoon.

The Golden Boot Award, given to the player with the most goals in the season, went to KHS' Pia Ngewakl who scored 21 goals.

Chavez was then named the finals MVP. In an interview after the game, she said, "honestly, going into the season, I knew we had a chance, but we just needed to play hard and work as a team."

With her MVP award, she said, "At the end of the day without my teammates, I wouldn't have been able to achieve the MVP trophy and it's a team effort. I was happy for our three seniors because it was their last game, so being able to win it for them was a great blessing."

As for her injury, she said after she landed on an MHS player's foot, she fell to the ground, angry, and cried, because that was the last thing she wanted to happen. And, despite a previous injury, "I wanted to play for the seniors and finally be able to win the title. When I went out and laid on the ground, I started crying, and I didn't care about the goal. I was just really mad



LEIGH GASES

Saipan International School's girls high school soccer team poses with their trophies and medals after their finals win against Marianas High School in the NMIFA-PSS Girls High School Interscholastic Soccer League 2023-2024 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

because I had just come back from a recent injury, and now I'm injured again, but for sure, I'll bounce back," she said.

Pam Walsh, SIS elementary school teacher and first-time head coach for the SIS girls high school soccer team, said of the game, "when we scored two in a row, it lifted the girls' spirits because they were the underdogs." She added, "MHS probably had some pressure too because they're defending champions, but for me, I'm like

'no pressure, but I want to win.' We've been talking about the play so everybody knows how to go about the game."

On how she felt about winning, she said she didn't know where to treat the players when they celebrate. "The ladies were waiting for this season. When the schedule was posted, there were just four teams playing and it was a double round-robin format, so it was busy, but we definitely had fun this season," said Walsh.

a Plan B, stay on Plan A. When things don't work out, I find a way to make a plan work."

Williams has been favored to become the top pick almost from the moment he won the Heisman in 2022.

Now, however, there are nagging questions about Williams. He has heard concerns over his size, how he handled the team's struggles in 2023, his mentality, even some rumored contract demands.

Yet on Friday, instead of addressing those questions, he may have raised another issue. Williams, who had already said he wouldn't work out in Indy, surprisingly said he was also opting out of medical exams at the combine.

"Not 32 teams can draft me. There's only one of me," Williams said. "The teams I go to for my visit, those teams will have the medical and that will be it."

Harrison also has taken an unconventional approach to the draft. He did no combine-specific training and doesn't intend to work out in Indy or at Ohio State's Pro Day.

Could their decisions affect the top of the first round? Perhaps.

Chicago owns the No. 1 pick and has Justin Fields, once thought to be its quarterback of the future. There is speculation that the Bears would either take Williams and trade Fields or keep Fields and pair him with Harrison.

Bears general manager Ryan Poles said earlier this week he'd hopes to make a decision about Fields soon, but Williams' approach to the combine

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the sport and placed ninth in the clean & jerk portion with a best of 138 kg. He placed 12th in the snatch lift with a best of 94 kg.

There, he was "happy" with

his performance and said, "I'm grateful to be given the opportunity to compete amongst the best in the world. There's a lot of lessons learned for sure that I took with me in helping me improve and be prepared for the 2024 Oceania Championships."



LeBron reaches 40K points, but Jokic, Nuggets beat Lakers, 124-114.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Pirates sail to Masters League 'ship

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Pirates raised the Jolly Roger's skull and bones high in the night breeze and sailed to the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League title after defeating the Dodgers in Game 3 last Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Pirates closer Pete Sablan restrained the rallying Dodgers long enough in the final inning to win, 16-11.

Spectators in black and blue, along with both dugouts were kept on the edge of their seats as it was an evenly matched game. It was neck-and-neck, 7-7, after a big two-run homer by Dodgers' Ed Manibusan tied it up in the third inning. But the advantage swayed to the Pirates when their bats caught fire and scored seven runs right after.

The Pirates had a 14-7 lead heading into the fifth inning as they capitalized on the Dodgers' crumbling pitching. Free bases and consecutive base hits by the Pirates put up seven runs in the third until the Dodgers finally recorded the third out.

The Dodgers tried to make a comeback in the fifth but scored only two runs to make it 14-9, and still had an uphill battle with the last inning around the corner.

The Pirates' Audie Maratita

made it on base in the sixth inning after a single and made it all the way home on a long double by lefty Eric Palacios. At this point, they were up, 16-10, and gunning for more. However, Dodgers pitcher Mark Villagomez got out of the jam and wrapped it up before the Pirates could blow the game wide open.

With everything on the line, in the last inning, Sablan held it down for the Pirates as the Dodgers tried to mount a comeback in their last at-bat. Villagomez walked, then was brought home on an extended single by Mel Manahane to make it 11-16. The Dodgers were on track to possibly tying it up or walking off, but they were already two outs down.

Sablan released the payoff and with a grounder to the shortstop, got the third out to second base in the nick of time to clinch the championship.

Pirates coach Nate Camacho



Pirates' Eric Palacios hit a double in the sixth inning that scored their 16th run in Game 3 of their finals series in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League last Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

said the Dodgers are a really good team, but that their team pulled through in the end as they scored the most runs.

Manager Jay Kintol said their gameplay heading into the finals was to just execute

their plays. "We didn't know who they were going to start, but we just had our guys prepared and ready to go. We told them to expect their ace to go on the mound and ultimately

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Leowell finishes 3rd in 2024 Oceania Weightlifting Champs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Weightlifter Lowell Cristobal struck first in the medal

haul for the six-man CNMI Weightlifting Federation team with a bronze medal in the 2024 Oceania Senior, Junior, and Youth Championships that was held in Auckland, New Zealand from Feb. 17 to 25.

In the senior men's 67-kg weight class, the U.S. Air Force airman airlifted a 100-kg snatch and 137 kg in the clean & jerk for a total of 237 kg weight lifted.

It was deja vu as gold was claimed by Samoan Vaipava Nevo Ioane's 282-kg overall lift, and silver went to Nauru's Ditto Ika who lifted a total of

255 kg. It was a repeat of the 67-kg clean & jerk podium finish in the 2023 Pacific Games last November in the Solomon Islands.

Cristobal said of the compe-

tition, "the competition atmosphere was electric and I was having fun out there." His 100-kg snatch and 237-kg total is now his new personal bests for

international competitions.

He thanked his family and friends for cheering him on and the CNMI Weightlifting Federation for allowing him to compete and represent the CNMI.

"I also want to thank Angel San Nicolas for helping me throughout my competition, making sure I was ready to hit my lifts on the stage, and Aiden Gimmed for pushing me in training," said the 25-year-old.

"Lastly, I want to give a happy advance birthday to my dad and anniversary to my parents!" he said.

Before the 2024 Oceania Championships, he competed in the 2023 International Weightlifting Federation Grand Prix II, which was held on Dec. 4-14 in Doha, Qatar.

He failed to reach the podium but competed against the best in

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Leowell Cristobal completes a successful lift during the 2024 Oceania Senior, Junior, and Youth Championships that was held in Auckland, New Zealand from Feb. 17 to 25.

SIS dethrones MHS in girls soccer showdown

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

It was a lucky leap day for Saipan International School Lady Geckos as they dethroned Marianas High School Lady Dolphins and finally clinched the ever-elusive NMIFA-PSS Girls High School Interscholastic Soccer League title.

This was the third season

they faced off in the finals and the Lady Geckos put in the work to stun two-time defending champions MHS, 5-2, last Thursday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The 2023 NMSA Student-Athlete of the Year, Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez, despite coming off an injury, played her heart out and led

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LEIGH GASES

Saipan International School's Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez sets up the play just before she scored the team's fifth goal while being defended by a Marianas High School player during the second half of their championship game in the NMIFA-PSS Girls High School Interscholastic Soccer League 2023-2024 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.